# THE CAXTON EDITION OF THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WITH ANNOTATIONS AND
A GENERAL INTRODUCTION
BY SIDNEY LEE

VOLUME XVI

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA
OTHELLO

CAXTON PUBLISHING COMPANY
CLUN HOUSE SURREY STREET LONDON W.C.

# TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

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# INTRODUCTION

OF all Shakespeare's plays, none presents a more formidable array of difficulties to the student of his mind and art than this "tragical-comical-historical poem unlimited" of "Troilus and Cressida"; and these difficulties are not invented by the critics. A simple reader, who approaches the play with no other desire than to hear a moving story well told, will find himself stumbled before he reaches the end of it. A story there is — one which had already, before Shakespeare's time, been told by the greatest story-teller among English poets. But here it is not told frankly; it is interrupted continually by the insinuations of hostile criticism, and the narrator seems to speak with a mocking voice. Chaucer's poem is a tale of love and fate, of amiable and pitiful human frailty sunning itself for a brief season, and broken by the wind of adversity. Shakespeare's play is a riddle, a two-edged satire on love and politics, a carnival of doubt and denial, a romance of the charnel-house of life, where "cold hopes swarm like worms within the living clay." He who in many of his plays asks for sympathy for all his characters, here seems to ask for sympathy for none. He stands aside, while the blended motives of human life — love, pride, ambition, loyalty — pass before him in review, and in each of them he finds something scandalous. The very spirit of criticism, which prompts men to stand aside, does not escape condemnation; it is ennobled in Hamlet, it is made infinitely delightful in Falstaff; in Thersites it is exhibited as the spirit of the deformed cur. There is none that doeth good, no, not one; and there is no day of judgment.

It is worth while to examine more in detail the impression that this play leaves upon the reader. The heroine, Cressida, is a marvel among Shakespeare's creations — a woman merely base. She is judged by the dispassionate Ulysses.

"Her wanton spirits look out
At every joint and motive of her body.
O, these encounterers, so glib of tongue,
That give a coasting welcome ere it comes,
And wide unclasp the tables of their thoughts
To every tickling reader! set them down
For sluttish spoils of opportunity
And daughters of the game."

Now and again her speech awakens in the memory distant and perverted echoes of the loved speech of Juliet. But what in Juliet is simple modesty in Cressida is skilful acting. She expounds her own principle:—

> "Men prize the thing ungain'd more than it is;"

and, in a burst of candour, laments that she weakly departed from it:—

> "Prithee, tarry;
> You men will never tarry.
> O foolish Cressid!—I might have still held off,
> And then you would have tarried."

Like Juliet, she is troubled with foreboding apprehensions when she grants her love. But Juliet's divinations are tragic:—

> "I have no joy of this contract to-night:
> It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden;
> Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be
> Ere one can say it lightens."

Cressida's, equally true in forecast, are expressed in another key. "What too curious dreg espies my sweet lady," says Troilus, "in the fountain of our love?" And she makes answer: "More dregs than water, if my fears have eyes." When nothing but the dregs is left, she passes out of the play with a reflection on her own fickle and shallow desires:—

> "O! then conclude,
> Minds, sway'd by eyes, are full of turpitude;"

and Thersites is at hand as epilogue to translate her last speech into his own lewd dialect.

The Greek and Trojan heroes are, most of them, fit enough gallants for Cressida. Achilles is a coward; he shirks a fair encounter with Hector, and when Hector is unarmed he sets on his henchmen to murder him. Agamemnon is a leader only in name, destitute of authority and influence. Ajax is a "valiant ignorance," noisy and witless and vain. Patroclus is apple-squire to Achilles. Nor are the Greeks thus degraded merely in order that the Trojans, the reputed ancestors of Western Christendom, may be exalted in comparison. Following his authorities, Shakespeare makes the Trojans braver and more honourable than the Greeks. But the same poison works in both camps — "love, love, nothing but love," which is everywhere exhibited as a disordinate and disabling sensuality. The first words of Troilus strike the keynote: —

> "Call here my varlet; I'll unarm again:
> Why should I war without the walls of Troy,
> That find such cruel battle here within?"

Paris is of a like mind. "I would fain have armed to-day," he says, when all the gallantry of Troy are afield, "but my sweet Nell would not have it so." Achilles keeps his tent for a similar reason. It was natural and innocent enough for the mediæval builders of the Trojan legend to give Achilles a lady-love in Polyxena, one of the daughters of King Priam. In the world of romance, without love there was no good fighting. But Shakespeare so transforms the old legend that the love of Achilles remains neither natural nor innocent. The hero spends his time in feasting and scurrility. He is easily dissuaded from battle: —

> "My sweet Patroclus, I am thwarted quite
> From my great purpose in to-morrow's battle.
> Here is a letter from Queen Hecuba,
> A token from her daughter, my fair love,
> Both taxing me and gaging me to keep
> An oath that I have sworn. I will not break it:
> Fall, Greeks; fail, fame; honour, or go, or stay;
> My major vow lies here, this I 'll obey.
> Come, come, Thersites, help to trim my tent;
> This night in banqueting must all be spent."

As for the mortal Venus, the battle-gage of two continents, the divine Helen, she becomes in this play indistinguishable from an orange-wench of the Restoration. She is pert and vain; she suspects her lord, Paris, of an attachment to Cressida, and breaks jests upon him until her unseemly innuendoes are reproved by Pandarus. But perhaps the best measure of Shakespeare's disaffection is to be found in the characters of Pandarus and Thersites. To these two, one in either camp, is entrusted the office of the Chorus. The business of criticism and counsel, so gently and excellently performed by the sweet-natured fools of many another play, has here fallen to the portion of a broker lackey and a cankered parasite. It is to be presumed that Pandarus and Thersites afforded occasions for the laughter which an Elizabethan audience was never content to forego. But there is no mirth in their desolate ribaldry. Who can feel at home in Shakespeare's world when his very jesters turn cruel and bitter?

They are the daylight of the other plays; their presence keeps us in touch with humanity, so that when Mercutio dies, or when the Fool in "King Lear" "goes to bed at noon," the darkness falls with tropical swiftness. But the jesting in this play of "Troilus and Cressida" is, from the first, the jesting of lost souls.

If the temper of the play raises difficulties, so does its structure, or lack of structure. Except "Henry VIII.," there is no play of Shakespeare's put together more loosely and carelessly — and "Henry VIII." is not wholly Shakespeare's, while "Troilus and Cressida," if a known voice be ever recognisable, is his from the first line to the last. Judged even by the standard of the romantic drama, which exacts only a unity of impression, the play is all confusion. The focus of interest is incessantly shifted, and the treachery of Cressida, if it be not the cause of the death of Hector, which might very well have happened without it, is the cause of nothing. The very semblance of tragedy is avoided, for Troilus is kept alive. The two motives of the play remain disparate, and their interaction is casually and indistinctly traced. If a single predominant moral must needs be found, it is the moral which has been expressed by the Lord Chancellor Bacon: "They do best who, if they cannot but admit love, yet make it keep quarter, and sever it wholly from their serious affairs and actions of life; for if it check once with business, it troubleth men's fortunes, and maketh men that they can no ways be true to their own ends." It would be difficult to find another place where Shakespeare's philosophy of love comes down to

Bacon's; and, even this place of meeting, which is as good a rock as will ever be found for the site of the church of the Baconians, has, in their blind devotion to acrostics and abracadabras, been overlooked by that illiterate and superstitious sect.

These difficulties have troubled all critics of Shakespeare, and have given rise to many hypotheses and conjectures. The editors of the Folio of 1623 seem to have been puzzled by the play, for in their tripartite division of Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies, they place it between the Histories and the Tragedies, leaving the reader to please himself. On the titlepage of the Quarto edition of 1609 it is called a History; in the preface it is alluded to as a Comedy. The suggestion has been made that the proprietors of the first Folio were unable to obtain the copyright of "Troilus and Cressida" until the printing of the volume was almost complete, and that they interposed it at the last moment, thereby breaking the scheme of pagination. But in any case, their difficulties are a forecast of the difficulties that have bewildered later generations, and the play remains unclassed.

A respectable company of critics have seen in it an attempt to depreciate ancient civilisation and the classical enthusiasms of the Renaissance. But unfortunately for their argument, the parts of the play on which they base it are found to have been borrowed, almost without exception, from the authorities who gave Shakespeare his story. Achilles is a coward already in the narrative of Guido delle Colonne, the Sicilian lawyer whose arid summary of the mediæval romance of Troy held undisputed sway over the popular imagination for four centuries. This scripture was divulged in England, for the benefit of the men of Shakespeare's time, in two principal versions. The earlier to appear in print, and by far the more influential of the two, was Caxton's "Recueyell of the Historyes of Troye" (1474), borrowed from Guido through the medium of the French version of Raoul le Fèvre. This book had a steady vogue; it survived the disuse of black-letter, and was reprinted again and again, with surprisingly few alterations, down to the age of Pope, when, under the title of "The Destruction of Troy," it still furnished entertainment to those who made no pretensions to polite taste. In the middle of the sixteenth century its supremacy was challenged by an edition of Lydgate's metrical version of Guido, — "The Ancient Historie . . . of the Warres betwixte the Grecians and the Troyans . . . by John Lydgate" (1555). It is amusing to find that Robert Braham, who introduces Lydgate to the reader, claims that his author is the only true and sincere historian of Troy, and attacks Caxton's fuller version of Guido as if it were an independent authority. The charges he brings against Caxton, though they are expressed with the venom of a partisan, yet would have some colour of truth if they were brought against Caxton's original. Caxton's story, says Braham, is "a longe tedious and brayneles bablyng, tending to no ende, nor havyng any certayne begynnynge: but proceadynge therin as an ydyot in his follye, that cannot make an ende tyll he be bydden."

The huddled and disjointed monotony of Guido's work afflicted all his derivatives, and supplied Shakespeare with material that not even he could reduce to order or symmetry.

From these two versions Shakespeare derived the bulk of his material. In them he found the names of the six gates of Troy, mentioned in the Prologue to the play, the names of the warriors on either side, languidly rehearsed by Agamemnon in Act V., sc. v., "the dreadful Sagittary," the visit of Hector to the Grecian camp, the cowardly assassination of Troilus by Achilles (where Shakespeare substitutes Hector for Troilus), and, in short, most of the incidents that make up the story of the play. He borrowed Thersites from Chapman, whose first instalment of the Iliad appeared in 1598. The love-story of Troilus, which in Guido's "Historia Trojana" is a passing incident, slightly sketched, he got from Chaucer, who got it from Boccaccio, who got it from Benoît de Sainte-More, who built it up on hints furnished by the traditions and forgeries of the Dark Ages. Chaucer, Caxton, Lydgate, Chapman,—these were the progenitors of Shakespeare's "Troilus and Cressida," after the flesh. Whence came the spirit which animates it,—a spirit so utterly unlike anything to be found in the earlier treatments of the legend?

The occasion and circumstances of its production, if they were known to us, might give us help. The preface to the Quarto of 1609 speaks of it as "a new play, never staled with the stage, never clapper-clawed with the palms of the vulgar," or "sullied with the smoky breath of the multitude." But this may mean that it had not been acted on the public stage, and does not forbid us to suppose that it may have been produced at a private theatre or on some private or semi-private occasion. Under the date of 1602 "the booke of Troilus and Cressida" is entered in the Stationers' Register to Mr. Roberts, who printed editions of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "The Merchant of Venice," and "Hamlet"; and this earlier date will be found to agree better with such evidence as may be drawn from the style of the play. If this date be accepted, a tempting hypothesis is offered us by those who maintain that we have here Shakespeare's contribution to the War of the Stages, and that in his portraits of the Grecian heroes he satirised some of his contemporaries. But even this supposition, which does not admit of disproof, brings no clear light with it. Thersites may have been a recognisable caricature of Marston, but there is no general agreement on the identity of the other persons aimed at, and no consistent theory has been advanced concerning Shakespeare's share and motives in the fray. In any case, we must not, without overwhelming evidence, suppose that Shakespeare ever wrote a play which depended for its meaning and its merit chiefly on its ephemeral references and its satire on particular persons. The most interesting parts of "Troilus and Cressida"—the love-story and the political philosophy—are in no way elucidated by this ingenious theory.

Internal evidence, as it is called, is at a great disadvantage in these dramatic and critical causes; the conviction that it produces is generally internal too, and cannot be imparted to other minds. Yet where that conviction is strong, it may be stated without offence. The long and infinitely laborious investigation that has been given, for more than a century now, to the chronology of Shakespeare's plays has at least established this conclusion, that plays produced about the same time frequently echo one another in device, in imagery, in metre, in turn of phrase; and that such echoes between plays lying far apart in time are both thin and rare. If "Troilus and Cressida" be read by one who listens for these echoes, it will be found that large parts of the drama display Shakespeare's earlier manner; and, in particular, that most of the scenes belonging to the love-story are haunted by reminiscences of the Comedies and "Romeo and Juliet." It is difficult to give instances without doing injustice to the argument, for the likeness is recognisable not so much in any startling coincidence as in a thousand turns of phrase and tricks of manner. The conceits of Shakespeare's earlier manner abound; for instance:—

> "I have (as when the sun doth light a storm)
> Buried this sigh in wrinkle of a smile." (I. i.)

> "Helen must needs be fair,
> When with your blood you daily paint her thus." (I. i.)

The use of rhyming couplets and the clink of word-play are frequent throughout these scenes; as here:—

> "That she was never yet that ever knew
> Love got so sweet as when desire did sue:" (I. ii.)

or here:—

> "O virtuous fight,
> When right with right wars who shall be most right!" (III. ii.)

This repetition of a word is habitual in Shakespeare's earlier plays, even to the peril of sense, as where Biron, in "Love's Labour's Lost," delivers himself thus:—

> "Light, seeking light, doth light of light beguile."

Again, the figures of speech and the dramatic devices which are employed in these same scenes find their parallel nowhere but in the Comedies. When Troilus exclaims (I. i.)—

> "Tell me, Apollo, for thy Daphne's love,
> What Cressid is, what Pandar, and what we?
> Her bed is India; there she lies, a pearl:
> Between our Ilium and where she resides,
> Let it be call'd the wild and wandering flood,
> Ourself the merchant;"—

we are reminded of Belmont and the wooing of Portia. When Pandarus says (I. ii.), "I think his smiling becomes him better than any man in all Phrygia," we think of Sir Andrew Ague-cheek. When he further remarks of Troilus, "He will weep you an 't were a man born in April," we think of Bottom the Weaver.

The dramatic situations of the Comedies are here repeated. When Æneas comes as ambassador to the Grecian camp (I. iii.) the ironical conversation that he holds with Agamemnon is curiously reminiscent of the first interview between Viola and Olivia in "Twelfth Night." By as strange a juxtaposition the mocking speech of Ulysses in praise of Ajax (II. iii.) —

"Thank the heavens, lord, thou art of sweet composure;
Praise him that got thee, she that gave thee suck: —

recalls Katharine's dutiful praise of old Vincentio in "The Taming of the Shrew." But the nearest affinity is with "Romeo and Juliet." Troilus, languishing for love of his lady (I. i.), speaks of "her hand, in whose comparison all whites are ink," just as Romeo speaks of "the white wonder of dear Juliet's hand." "O Cressida," he says again (IV. ii.),

"but that the busy day,
Waked by the lark, hath roused the ribald crows,
And dreaming night will hide our joys no longer,
I would not from thee."

Cressida's casuistical wit concerning the giving and taking of kisses (IV. v.) recalls the first conversation of Romeo with Juliet. Pandarus, who is very unlike the genial elderly philosopher and man of the world described by Chaucer, is very like Juliet's Nurse. He has the same large volubility and irrelevance of speech. His phrases are sometimes almost identical with hers. "O admirable man!" he says, praising Troilus to Cressida. "Paris? Paris is dirt to him" (I. ii.). "O, he 's a lovely gentleman," says the Nurse of another Paris, "Romeo 's a dishclout to him;" and she goes on, like Pandarus, to compare the subject of her discourse to an eagle. "A goodly medicine for mine aching bones!" says Pandarus (V. xi.) at the close of the play. "Is this the poultice for my aching bones?" says the Nurse. But these are trifles. No one, in whose ears the cadences of "Romeo and Juliet" are still ringing, can listen to the speech of Pandarus without innumerable reminiscences, now of the Nurse, now of Friar Laurence. On the whole, the character of Pandarus is less adequately conceived and less firmly drawn than that of the Nurse.

Nevertheless, it cannot be allowed for an instant that the play, as a whole, is one of Shakespeare's early plays. There are in it echoes also of the great tragedies. One passage — Thersites' description of Ajax (III. iii.), "He is grown a very land fish, languageless, a monster" — has often been pointed to as the germ of the conception of Caliban. Thersites' abuse of Patroclus (V. i.) — "Thou idle immaterial skein of sleave-silk, thou green sarcenet flap for a sore eye, thou tassel of a prodigal's purse, thou! Ah, how the poor world is pestered with such water-flies;" — recalls Kent's rich vein of invective in "King Lear" and Hamlet's contempt for young Osric. There are other reminders of "Hamlet," — as where Troilus, asked by Pandarus what he is reading, replies (V. iii.), "Words, words, mere words"; or where, after witnessing the perfidy of Cressida, he stands transfixed to the spot, and argues with Ulysses after the very manner of the Danish prince (V. ii.). "What hath she done, prince, that can soil our mothers?" asks Ulysses, who has not followed the quick train of thought in Troilus; and he is answered with all the abrupt irony of Hamlet, "Nothing at all, unless that this were she." There are many near resemblances to "King Lear," some to "Macbeth," and, most telling of all, there is evidence in the play of Shakespeare's reading of Plutarch. In some of the scenes in the Grecian camp there is the condensed, highly figured rhetoric and the packed wealth of thought that distinguish Shakespeare's later manner. So that in this play work that bears all the marks of youth alternates with work that is indisputably mature.

The loose structure of the play makes it easy to believe that it does in fact combine the work of two periods, and that when he wrote it Shakespeare used up parts of an earlier play of his own, which he had discontinued and laid aside. We pass here into the region of speculation; and with good excuse. There is no explanation of "Troilus and Cressida" that holds the field; no satisfactory account of its place in the file of Shakespeare's works. In the absence of any plausible demonstration of what was, it is legitimate to set forth what may have been. If Shakespeare, during the early years of his dramatic activity, was seeking for a love-story whereon to found a play, the best-known and most obvious of love-stories was the story of "Troilus and Cressida." During the whole of the sixteenth century it enjoyed a popularity which threatened sometimes to cast even the "Canterbury Tales" into the shade. In the reign of Henry VIII. it was the favourite reading of the younger sort of courtier. Sir Thomas Elyot's dialogue called "Pasquil the Playne" (1533) introduces Gnatho, the flatterer, who carries in his hand a copy of the New Testament, but has "Troilus and Cressida" concealed in his bosom. Allusions to the two lovers are everywhere to be found in the verses of those "rhyming mother-wits" who preceded Spenser and Marlowe. The names of Troilus and Cressida, like that of their go-between, were in a fair way to become common nouns. George Turbervile, in a poem addressed to his lady visiting London, examples this. He invokes the town: —

"Yeelde me a good accompt
Of hir that is my joie,
*And send hir to hir* Troylus
That longs for hir in Troie."

If we had no specific evidence we still could not doubt that Shakespeare very early read the story. But indeed he alludes to it more than once. "I would play Lord Pandarus of Phrygia, sir," says the Clown in "Twelfth Night" as he eyes the coin that Viola has just given him, "to bring a Troilus to this Cressida." The passage in "The Merchant of Venice" is a more direct reminiscence of Chaucer: —

"In such a night
Troilus methinks mounted the Troyan walls
And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night."

There is nothing extravagant in the supposition that before he took up with Arthur Brooke's story of Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare had tried his prentice hand on this more popular theme; and it is easy to find half a dozen reasons why he should have abandoned it in favour of a whole-hearted romance. The story lends itself too easily to the purposes of the cynic. It compels even Chaucer, whose heart is with the lovers, and who struggles throughout with the intractable moral imposed on him by his material, to blaspheme his own sympathies in the concluding verses of his tale.

But in 1602 and later Shakespeare's attitude had changed. It is needless to raise the well-worn question concerning the influences and causes that found the author of "Twelfth Night" and made him into the author of "Hamlet." There is a present-day tendency — anti-sentimental, and so far laudable — to regard Shakespeare as a tradesman of genius, and to account for the differences between one play and another by the fluctuating fashions of the theatrical market that he supplied. But this view, besides compelling us to assume that for some eight or ten years the public would take nothing from Shakespeare but heart-rending woes, makes nonsense of poetry, which gains followers in every age only by tempting them with opportunities for self-expression. Whether the events which darkened the world for Shakespeare were events that a law-court could take cognisance of, or a registrar could record, we do not know. We do know that the world was darkened for him. This is no question of the difference between tragedy and comedy; a comedy may be bitter, and a tragedy sweet. "Romeo and Juliet" is a tragedy; "Measure for Measure," a comedy. And "Romeo and Juliet" is full of Shakespeare's irony. How stupid a series of blunders it is that brings the lovers to their tomb! How shadowy and trivial the feuds of the Montagues and Capulets appear against the luminous heaven of this great passion! But in "Troilus and Cressida" the moral is reversed. It is politics that matter now; and politics are a disappointment. In place of the heavy stage fathers and worldly mothers whose insensibility to the true issue thwarts the smooth course of things, we have the lovers themselves, blinded by their passion, and the "heroes," blinded by their vanity.

In the speeches of Ulysses, Shakespeare's political creed finds utterance. If the famous speech in defence of "degree, priority, and place" (I. iii.) be not an expression of that creed, it is impossible to know where to look for any trace of it. In this respect Shakespeare was a man of his time, of the sixteenth century, and of Tudor, England. His political sympathies, like those of Chaucer before him and Johnson after him, were aristocratic. He believed, with Chaucer's Parson, that "the commune profit might nat han be kept, ne pees and reste in erthe, but if God hadde ordayned that somme men hadde hyer degree and som men lower." No other doctrine, it might almost be said, was tenable in the reign of Elizabeth. After centuries of degradation and distraction from internal feuds, England had at last attained to peace and renown under a strong monarchy. The English historical plays are a striking evidence, if evidence were needed, of the deep impress left on the popular imagination by the miseries of the Wars of the Roses. Towards the end of the reign of Elizabeth, a recurrence of these miseries from a disputed succession seemed likely. The fervent speech of the Bishop of Carlisle in "Richard II." (IV. i.) —

> "O, if you rear this house against this house,
> It will the woefullest division prove
> That ever fell upon this cursed earth; —"

when it was spoken on the boards of the Elizabethan stage, was something more than an academic declamation. It was applauded by men who saw in it an allusion to the future as well as to the past. There was no foothold in England for the practical doctrines of democracy, which were held, in actual life as in Shakespeare's plays, chiefly by pedants and rebels. Some scholars dreamed in their studies of a restoration of ancient republican forms. But Shakespeare, not being scholar enough to seek guidance from the ancients, habitually reads Roman history by the light of English politics. And the reflections of Ulysses on the nature of political reputation and the fickleness of popular applause have all the sincerity of experience. Who should know the weaknesses of the people if not a theatrical manager? Moreover, Shakespeare, by his association with Southampton, and perhaps with Essex, had been brought very close to the political troubles of Elizabeth's last years.

The note of sincerity and passion which marks the utterance of Ulysses is heard again in the anguish of Troilus. If the purpose of the play be indeed ironical and satirical, here it breaks down. The dramatist was too full of the milk of human kindness to pass cold sentences of damnation on all his creatures. The defeated love of Troilus touched him too near. It is the weakness and the strength of Shakespeare as a dramatist that his plots are often sacrificed to his characters. His puppets come alive, and assume control. If, in his haste, he chose an ironical conception as the framework of his play, he could not, like the bloodless wits and fierce misanthropes, carry it out consistently and relentlessly to the end. The love of Troilus, anywhere but in this play, would be matter for tragedy. He is as true a lover as any of Shakespeare's making, and when the gibes of Thersites have faded from the memory, there still rings in the ears of the reader the pathos of that farewell, that plea of Love against the felon Time, who

> "Scants us with a single famished kiss,
> Distasted with the salt of broken tears."

WALTER RALEIGH.

# TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

# DRAMATIS PERSONÆ[1]

Priam, king of Troy.
Hector,
Troilus,
Paris, his sons.
Deiphobus,
Helenus,
Margarelon, a bastard son of Priam.
Æneas,
Antenor, Trojan commanders.
Calchas, a Trojan priest, taking part with the Greeks.
Pandarus, uncle to Cressida.
Agamemnon, the Grecian general.
Menelaus, his brother.
Achilles,
Ajax,
Ulysses,
Nestor, Grecian commanders.
Diomedes,
Patroclus,
Thersites, a deformed and scurrilous Grecian.
Alexander, servant to Cressida.
Servant to Troilus.
Servant to Paris.
Servant to Diomedes.

Helen, wife to Menelaus.
Andromache, wife to Hector.
Cassandra, daughter to Priam; a prophetess.
Cressida, daughter to Calchas.

Trojan and Greek Soldiers, and Attendants.

Scene: *Troy, and the Grecian camp*

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[1] Two quartos of this piece appeared in 1609, one with a fantastic preface by the publisher, but otherwise with identical texts. The Folio of 1623 varies greatly from the Quartos, mostly for the worse. The Quartos have no division into Acts or Scenes. The Folio has only the preliminary heading "Actus Primus. Scœna Prima." Rowe first divided the play into acts and scenes, and gave a list of the Dramatis Personæ with an indication of the "Scene."

# THE PROLOGUE

IN TROY THERE LIES THE scene. From isles of Greece
The princes orgulous, their high blood chafed,
Have to the port of Athens sent their ships,
Fraught with the ministers and instruments
Of cruel war: sixty and nine, that wore
Their crownets regal, from the Athenian bay
Put forth toward Phrygia, and their vow is made
To ransack Troy, within whose strong immures
The ravish'd Helen, Menelaus' queen,

---

THE PROLOGUE *In Troy . . . of war*] The Prologue only appears in the Folio. It is omitted from the Quartos. It is probably by another hand than Shakespeare's.

2 *orgulous*] proud, haughty; an archaic usage from the French "orgueilleux."

With wanton Paris sleeps; and that's the quarrel.
To Tenedos they come;
And the deep-drawing barks do there disgorge
Their warlike fraughtage: now on Dardan plains
The fresh and yet unbruised Greeks do pitch
Their brave pavilions: Priam's six-gated city,
Dardan, and Timbria, Helias, Chetas, Troien,
And Antenorides, with massy staples,
And corresponsive and fulfilling bolts,
Sperr up the sons of Troy.
Now expectation, tickling skittish spirits,
On one and other side, Trojan and Greek,
Sets all on hazard: and hither am I come
A prologue arm'd, but not in confidence

---

6 *crownets*] coronets. Cf. *Hamlet*, V, i, 4: "crowner" (for "coroner").

8 *immures*] fortified walls ; rare as a noun, although common as a verb.

13 *fraughtage*] freightage, cargo.

15–17 *Priam's six-gated city . . . Antenorides*] These names of Troy's gates correspond with the medieval tradition, as recorded in Lydgate's *Troy book* and Caxton's *Recuyell of Troy*.

18 *corresponsive and fulfilling*] close fitting and well fastening.

19 *Sperr up*] Bar in; Theobald's correction of the original reading *Stirre up*. To sperr, *i. e.*, bar, the gate was a common Elizabethan expression.

22 *Sets all on hazard*] Exposes everything to risks of battle.

23–25 *A prologue arm'd . . . argument*] Apparently a hit at the "armed prologue" which introduced Jonson's polemical *Poetaster*, 1602. Jonson's "prologue" explained that he bore arms to protect himself against "base detractors and illiterate apes," *i. e.*, the fellow dramatists and actors with whom he was at fierce feud at the time. Here the "prologue," by way of peaceful contrast, justifies his being armed from no vainglory on the part of author or actor, but because he has to introduce warlike topics.

Of author's pen or actor's voice, but suited
In like conditions as our argument,
To tell you, fair beholders, that our play
Leaps o'er the vaunt and firstlings of those broils,
Beginning in the middle; starting thence away
To what may be digested in a play.
Like, or find fault; do as your pleasures are:
Now good or bad, 't is but the chance of war.

---

27 *vaunt*] van, vanguard.

## ACT FIRST — SCENE I — TROY

### *BEFORE PRIAM'S PALACE*

*Enter* Pandarus *and* Troilus

**Troilus**

CALL HERE MY VARLET; I'll unarm again:
Why should I war without the walls of Troy,
That find such cruel battle here within?
Each Trojan that is master of his heart,
Let him to field; Troilus, alas, hath none!
 **Pan.** Will this gear ne'er be mended?
 **Tro.** The Greeks are strong and skilful to their strength,
Fierce to their skill and to their fierceness valiant,
But I am weaker than a woman's tear,

---

1 *varlet*] orderly, servant, valet.

5 *Troilus*] This name is pronounced throughout the play as a dissyllable.

Tamer than sleep, fonder than ignorance,
Less valiant than the virgin in the night,
And skilless as unpractised infancy.

PAN. Well, I have told you enough of this: for my part, I'll not meddle nor make no farther. He that will have a cake out of the wheat must needs tarry the grinding.

TRO. Have I not tarried?

PAN. Ay, the grinding; but you must tarry the bolting.

TRO. Have I not tarried?

PAN. Ay, the bolting; but you must tarry the leavening.

TRO. Still have I tarried.

PAN. Ay, to the leavening; but here 's yet in the word "hereafter," the kneading, the making of the cake, the heating of the oven, and the baking; nay, you must stay the cooling too, or you may chance to burn your lips.

TRO. Patience herself, what goddess e'er she be,
Doth lesser blench at sufferance than I do.
At Priam's royal table do I sit;
And when fair Cressid comes into my thoughts, —
So, traitor!—"When she comes!"—When is she thence?

---

6 *gear*] business.

7 *to their strength*] in addition to. So "*to* their skill" and "*to* their fierceness" in line 8.

10 *fonder*] more foolish.

14 *not meddle nor make*] proverbial for "keeping clear of" a thing.

20 *the bolting*] the sifting.

28 *blench at sufferance*] flinch from suffering (pain).

31 *So, traitor! — "When she comes!"*] Thus Rowe. The old editions read *then she comes* for *When she comes*, and punctuate confusedly.

PAN. Well, she looked yesternight fairer than ever I saw her look, or any woman else.

TRO. I was about to tell thee: — when my heart,
As wedged with a sigh, would rive in twain,
Lest Hector or my father should perceive me,
I have, as when the sun doth light a storm,
Buried this sigh in wrinkle of a smile:
But sorrow, that is couch'd in seeming gladness,
Is like that mirth fate turns to sudden sadness.

PAN. An her hair were not somewhat darker than Helen's — well, go to — there were no more comparison between the women: but, for my part, she is my kinswoman; I would not, as they term it, praise her: but I would somebody had heard her talk yesterday, as I did. I will not dispraise your sister Cassandra's wit, but —

TRO. O Pandarus! I tell thee, Pandarus, —
When I do tell thee, there my hopes lie drown'd,
Reply not in how many fathoms deep
They lie indrench'd. I tell thee, I am mad
In Cressid's love: thou answer'st "she is fair;"
Pour'st in the open ulcer of my heart
Her eyes, her hair, her cheek, her gait, her voice,
Handlest in thy discourse, O, that her hand,
In whose comparison all whites are ink
Writing their own reproach, to whose soft seizure
The cygnet's down is harsh, and spirit of sense

---

37 *a storm*] Rowe's correction of the unintelligible *a scorne* and *a-scorne* of the old copies.

54 *O, that her hand*] Oh, that hand of hers.

56 *to whose soft seizure*] compared with whose soft clasp or touch.

57–58 *spirit of sense . . . ploughman*] the power of sensibility (in other

Hard as the palm of ploughman: this thou tell'st me,
As true thou tell'st me, when I say I love her;
But, saying thus, instead of oil and balm,
Thou lay'st in every gash that love hath given me
The knife that made it.

Pan. I speak no more than truth.

Tro. Thou dost not speak so much.

Pan. Faith, I'll not meddle in 't. Let her be as she is: if she be fair, 't is the better for her; an she be not, she has the mends in her own hands.

Tro. Good Pandarus, how now, Pandarus!

Pan. I have had my labour for my travail; ill-thought on of her, and ill-thought on of you: gone between and between, but small thanks for my labour.

Tro. What, art thou angry, Pandarus? what, with
me?

Pan. Because she's kin to me, therefore she's not so fair as Helen: an she were not kin to me, she would be as fair on Friday as Helen is on Sunday. But what care I? I care not an she were a black-a-moor; 't is all one to me.

---

people's hand), compared with Cressida's, is hard as the palm of a ploughman. "Spirit of sense" is repeated III, iii, 106, *infra:* "that most pure *spirit of sense* (*sc.* of the eye)."

67 *she has the mends in her own hands*] a proverbial phrase. The remedy lies at her own disposal. She may improve her complexion by using cosmetics.

70–71 *gone between and between*] played the go-between over and over again. Cf. III, ii, 197, *infra:* "goer between."

75 *as fair . . . on Sunday*] as fair on the fast day (when shabby clothes are worn), as Helen is on a Sunday (when people dress their best).

TRO. Say I she is not fair?

PAN. I do not care whether you do or no. She's a fool to stay behind her father; let her to the Greeks; and so I'll tell her the next time I see her: for my part, I'll meddle nor make no more i' the matter.

TRO. Pandarus, —

PAN. Not I.

TRO. Sweet Pandarus, —

PAN. Pray you, speak no more to me: I will leave all as I found it, and there an end. [*Exit. An alarum.*

TRO. Peace, you ungracious clamours! peace, rude sounds!
Fools on both sides! Helen must needs be fair,
When with your blood you daily paint her thus.
I cannot fight upon this argument;
It is too starved a subject for my sword.
But Pandarus — O gods, how do you plague me!
I cannot come to Cressid but by Pandar;
And he 's as tetchy to be woo'd to woo
As she is stubborn-chaste against all suit.
Tell me, Apollo, for thy Daphne's love,
What Cressid is, what Pandar, and what we.
Her bed is India; there she lies, a pearl:
Between our Ilium and where she resides,

---

80 *her father*] Calchas, the Trojan priest, who, being sent by Priam to consult the oracle at Delphi, joined the Greeks at the divine command.

95 *tetchy to be woo'd*] ill-tempered, peevish, on being wooed.

97 *Apollo . . . Daphne's love*] The story of Apollo's courtship of Daphne is told in Ovid's *Metam.*, I, 452 *seq.* Cf. *T. of Shrew, Induction*, II, 55–58.

100 *Ilium*] It is clear that wherever Shakespeare employs the form

Let it be call'd the wild and wandering flood,
Ourself the merchant, and this sailing Pandar
Our doubtful hope, our convoy and our bark.

*Alarum. Enter* ÆNEAS

ÆNE. How now, Prince Troilus! wherefore not afield?
TRO. Because not there: this woman's answer sorts,
For womanish it is to be from thence.
What news, Æneas, from the field to-day?
ÆNE. That Paris is returned home, and hurt
TRO. By whom, Æneas?
ÆNE. Troilus, by Menelaus.
TRO. Let Paris bleed: 't is but a scar to scorn;
Paris is gored with Menelaus' horn. [*Alarum.*
ÆNE. Hark, what good sport is out of town to-day!
TRO. Better at home, if "would I might" were "may."
But to the sport abroad: are you bound thither?
ÆNE. In all swift haste.
TRO. Come, go we then together.
[*Exeunt.*

---

"Ilium" he designates Priam's royal palace (cf. I, ii, 43, *infra*) in agreement with his medieval authorities. Elsewhere, II, ii, 109, and V, viii, 11, *infra*, Shakespeare uses the form "Ilion," by which he seems to mean, though the point is uncertain, Troy itself, in accordance with classical usage.

105 *sorts*] fits, harmonises.

110 *a scar to scorn*] a scar to be scorned.

111 *Menelaus' horn*] a reference to the belief that horns sprouted from the foreheads of husbands whose wives were unfaithful.

## SCENE II — THE SAME

### *A STREET*

*Enter* CRESSIDA *and* ALEXANDER *her man*

CRES. Who were those went by?
ALEX. Queen Hecuba and Helen.
CRES. And whither go they?
ALEX. Up to the eastern tower,
Whose height commands as subject all the vale,
To see the battle. Hector, whose patience
Is as a virtue fix'd, to-day was moved:
He chid Andromache and struck his armourer;
And, like as there were husbandry in war,
Before the sun rose he was harness'd light,
And to the field goes he; where every flower
Did, as a prophet, weep what it foresaw
In Hector's wrath.
CRES. What was his cause of anger?
ALEX. The noise goes, this: there is among the Greeks
A lord of Trojan blood, nephew to Hector;
They call him Ajax.

---

5 *fix'd*] constant or inherent, not variable nor accidental.

7 *like as . . . husbandry in war*] as if there were need of economy (of time and energy) in warfare.

8 *light*] nimbly, quickly. No reference is intended to the weight of the armour.

13-14 *A lord of Trojan blood . . . Ajax*] Ajax's mother, Priam's sister, CRES. Good; and what of him?

ALEX. They say he is a very man per se,
And stands alone.

CRES. So do all men, unless they are drunk, sick, or have no legs.

ALEX. This man, lady, hath robbed many beasts of their particular additions; he is as valiant as the lion, churlish as the bear, slow as the elephant: a man into whom nature hath so crowded humours that his valour is crushed into folly, his folly sauced with discretion: there is no man hath a virtue that he hath not a glimpse of, nor any man an attaint but he carries some stain of it: he is melancholy without cause and merry against the hair: he hath the joints of every thing; but every thing so out of joint that he is a gouty Briareus, many hands and no use, or purblind Argus, all eyes and no sight.

---

was a Trojan, and was Hector's first cousin. Cf. II, i, 12, II, ii, 77, and IV, v, 120 *seq.*, *infra.* "Nephew" may be used for "kinsman" like the Latin "nepos."

15 *a very man per se*] a man unique, peerless, sui generis. The phrase is often written "A per se" (*i. e.*, the letter A by itself), which is sometimes corrupted into "apersey."

20 *particular additions*] particular qualities, titles to merit, or attributes.

22–23 *his valour . . . folly*] his valour is so mixed up with folly that the two are indistinguishable from one another in the mass.

26–27 *against the hair*] against the grain, unseasonably, like the French "à contrepoil."

27 *the joints of every thing*] the limbs of every kind of being.

28 *Briareus*] the hundred-handed monster of classical mythology. He is mentioned by Shakespeare nowhere else. Cf. "centumgeminus Briareus": Virgil, *Æneid*, VI, 287.

29 *Argus*] the hundred-eyed monster of classical mythology. Cf. Ovid's *Metam.*, I, 625. "Centum luminibus cinctum caput Argus habebat."

CRES. But how should this man, that makes me smile, make Hector angry?

ALEX. They say he yesterday coped Hector in the battle and struck him down, the disdain and shame whereof hath ever since kept Hector fasting and waking.

*Enter* PANDARUS

CRES. Who comes here?

ALEX. Madam, your uncle Pandarus.

CRES. Hector 's a gallant man.

ALEX. As may be in the world, lady.

PAN. What 's that? what 's that?

CRES. Good morrow, uncle Pandarus.

PAN. Good morrow, cousin Cressid: what do you talk of? Good morrow, Alexander. How do you, cousin? When were you at Ilium?

CRES. This morning, uncle.

PAN. What were you talking of when I came? Was Hector armed and gone ere you came to Ilium? Helen was not up, was she?

CRES. Hector was gone; but Helen was not up.

PAN. E'en so: Hector was stirring early.

CRES. That were we talking of, and of his anger.

PAN. Was he angry?

CRES. So he says here.

PAN. True, he was so; I know the cause too; he 'll lay about him to-day, I can tell them that: and there's Troilus will not come far behind him; let them take heed of Troilus, I can tell them that too.

---

32 *coped*] met, encountered.

43 *Ilium*] See note on I, i, 100, *supra.*

CRES. What, is he angry too?

PAN. Who, Troilus? Troilus is the better man of the two.

CRES. O Jupiter! there's no comparison.

PAN. What, not between Troilus and Hector? Do you know a man if you see him?

CRES. Ay, if I ever saw him before and knew him.

PAN. Well, I say Troilus is Troilus.

CRES. Then you say as I say; for, I am sure, he is not Hector.

PAN. No, nor Hector is not Troilus in some degrees.

CRES. 'T is just to each of them; he is himself.

PAN. Himself! Alas, poor Troilus! I would he were.

CRES. So he is.

PAN. Condition, I had gone barefoot to India.

CRES. He is not Hector.

PAN. Himself! no, he's not himself: would a' were himself! Well, the gods are above; time must friend or end: well, Troilus, well, I would my heart were in her body! No, Hector is not a better man than Troilus.

CRES. Excuse me.

PAN. He is elder.

CRES. Pardon me, pardon me.

PAN. Th' other 's not come to 't; you shall tell me

---

71 *Condition . . . India*] On the condition that he were himself, I would have walked barefoot to India — an impossible feat. Pandarus means that by no possibility could he admit that Troilus was in a normal state.

another tale, when th' other 's come to 't. Hector shall not have his wit this year.

CRES. He shall not need it, if he have his own.

PAN. Nor his qualities.

CRES. No matter.

PAN. Nor his beauty.

CRES. 'T would not become him; his own 's better.

PAN. You have no judgement, niece: Helen herself swore th' other day, that Troilus, for a brown favour — for so 't is, I must confess, — not brown neither, —

CRES. No, but brown.

PAN. Faith, to say truth, brown and not brown.

CRES. To say the truth, true and not true.

PAN. She praised his complexion above Paris.

CRES. Why, Paris hath colour enough.

PAN. So he has.

CRES. Then Troilus should have too much: if she praised him above, his complexion is higher than his; he having colour enough, and the other higher, is too flaming a praise for a good complexion. I had as lief Helen's golden tongue had commended Troilus for a copper nose.

PAN. I swear to you, I think Helen loves him better than Paris.

CRES. Then she's a merry Greek indeed.

---

82 *his wit*] Troilus' sense; Rowe's correction of the old reading *will*.

89 *a brown favour*] a brown complexion.

98–99 *higher . . . higher*] more highly coloured.

101 *a copper nose*] a red nose, from drink or disease.

104 *a merry Greek*] a common phrase for a lively person, usually "a jolly fellow." Cf. IV, iv, 55, *infra*.

Pan. Nay, I am sure she does. She came to him th' other day into the compassed window, — and, you know, he has not past three or four hairs on his chin, —

Cres. Indeed, a tapster's arithmetic may soon bring his particulars therein to a total.

Pan. Why, he is very young: and yet will he, within three pound, lift as much as his brother Hector.

Cres. Is he so young a man and so old a lifter?

Pan. But, to prove to you that Helen loves him: she came and puts me her white hand to his cloven chin, —

Cres. Juno have mercy! how came it cloven?

Pan. Why, you know, 't is dimpled: I think his smiling becomes him better than any man in all Phrygia.

Cres. O, he smiles valiantly.

Pan. Does he not?

Cres. O yes, an 't were a cloud in autumn.

Pan. Why, go to, then: but to prove to you that Helen loves Troilus, —

Cres. Troilus will stand to the proof, if you'll prove it so.

Pan. Troilus! why, he esteems her no more than I esteem an addle egg.

Cres. If you love an addle egg as well as you love an idle head, you would eat chickens i' the shell.

Pan. I cannot choose but laugh, to think how she tickled his chin; indeed, she has a marvellous white hand, I must needs confess, —

---

106 *compassed window*] round or bow-window. Cf. *T. of Shrew*, IV, iii, 136: "*compassed* cape."

112 *lifter*] thief; "lift" in this sense survives in "shop-*lifting*."

120 *a cloud in autumn*] a signal of rain.

CRES. Without the rack.

PAN. And she takes upon her to spy a white hair on his chin.

CRES. Alas, poor chin! many a wart is richer.

PAN. But there was such laughing! Queen Hecuba laughed, that her eyes ran o'er.

CRES. With mill-stones.

PAN. And Cassandra laughed.

CRES. But there was more temperate fire under the pot of her eyes: did her eyes run o'er too?

PAN. And Hector laughed.

CRES. At what was all this laughing?

PAN. Marry, at the white hair that Helen spied on Troilus' chin.

CRES. An 't had been a green hair, I should have laughed too.

PAN. They laughed not so much at the hair as at his pretty answer.

CRES. What was his answer?

PAN. Quoth she, "Here 's but two and fifty hairs on your chin, and one of them is white."

CRES. This is her question.

PAN. That's true; make no question of that. "Two and fifty hairs," quoth he, "and one white: that white hair is my father, and all the rest are his sons." "Jupiter!" quoth she, "which of these hairs is Paris my

---

137–138 *her eyes ran o'er With mill-stones*] a common expression for hard-heartedness. Cf. *Rich. III*, I, iii, 354: "Your eyes drop *mill-stones*" and note.

151, 154 *two and fifty*] Thus the early editions, which Theobald changed to *one and fifty*, fifty being the traditional number of Priam's sons.

husband?" "The forked one," quoth he, "pluck't out, and give it him." But there was such laughing! and Helen so blushed, and Paris so chafed, and all the rest so laughed, that it passed.

CRES. So let it now; for it has been a great while going by.

PAN. Well, cousin, I told you a thing yesterday; think on't.

CRES. So I do.

PAN. I'll be sworn 't is true; he will weep you, an 't were a man born in April.

CRES. And I'll spring up in his tears, an 't were a nettle against May. [*A retreat sounded.*

PAN. Hark! they are coming from the field: shall we stand up here, and see them as they pass toward Ilium? good niece, do, sweet niece Cressida.

CRES. At your pleasure.

PAN. Here, here, here's an excellent place; here we may see most bravely: I'll tell you them all by their names as they pass by; but mark Troilus above the rest.

ÆNEAS *passes*

CRES. Speak not so loud.

PAN. That's Æneas: is not that a brave man? he's

---

158 *The forked one*] An allusion to the forked horns associated with the deceived husband's brow.

161 *it passed*] it surpassed everything, went to immoderate limits. Cressida in the next line puns on the word in its ordinary sense.

167–168 *an 't were a man*] as if he were a man.

170 *against May*] at the approach of May.

one of the flowers of Troy, I can tell you: but mark Troilus; you shall see anon.

CRES. Who's that?

ANTENOR *passes*

PAN. That's Antenor: he has a shrewd wit, I can tell you; and he 's a man good enough: he 's one o' the soundest judgements in Troy, whosoever, and a proper man of person. When comes Troilus? I 'll show you Troilus anon: if he see me, you shall see him nod at me.

CRES. Will he give you the nod?

PAN. You shall see.

CRES. If he do, the rich shall have more.

HECTOR *passes*

PAN. That's Hector, that, that, look you, that; there 's a fellow! Go thy way, Hector! There 's a brave man, niece. O brave Hector! Look how he looks! there 's a countenance! is 't not a brave man?

CRES. O, a brave man!

PAN. Is a' not? it does a man's heart good. Look you what hacks are on his helmet! look you yonder, do you see? look you there: there's no jesting; there's

---

183 *he has a shrewd wit*] Lydgate in his Troy-book seems to be the only authority which gives Antenor the distinctive character of a wit.

185–186 *a proper man of person*] a man of comely person.

188–190 *Will he give you the nod? . . . have more*] The word "nod" suggests to Cressida the slang word "noddy," *i. e.*, simpleton, and means that if Troilus give Pandarus a nod (*i. e.*, a fool's token), Pandarus will receive a new supply of stupidity, in which he was rich before. Steevens doubtfully suggests that "give the nod" was a technical term in a game of cards called "noddy."

laying on, take't off who will, as they say: there be hacks!

Cres. Be those with swords?

Pan. Swords! any thing, he cares not; an the devil come to him, it's all one: by God's lid, it does one's heart good. Yonder comes Paris, yonder comes Paris.

Paris *passes*

Look ye yonder, niece; is't not a gallant man too, is't not? Why, this is brave now. Who said he came hurt home to-day? he 's not hurt: why, this will do Helen's heart good now, ha! Would I could see Troilus now! you shall see Troilus anon.

Cres. Who 's that?

Helenus *passes*

Pan. That's Helenus: I marvel where Troilus is. That's Helenus. I think he went not forth to-day. That's Helenus.

Cres. Can Helenus fight, uncle?

Pan. Helenus! no; yes, he'll fight indifferent well. I marvel where Troilus is. Hark! do you not hear the people cry "Troilus"? Helenus is a priest.

Cres. What sneaking fellow comes yonder?

Troilus *passes*

Pan. Where? yonder? that's Deiphobus. 'T is Troilus! there's a man, niece! Hem! Brave Troilus! the prince of chivalry!

---

203 *by God's lid*] by God's eyelid; a proverbial oath.

CRES. Peace, for shame, peace!

PAN. Mark him; note him. O brave Troilus! Look well upon him, niece; look you how his sword is bloodied, and his helm more hacked than Hector's; and how he looks, and how he goes! O admirable youth! he never saw three-and-twenty. Go thy way, Troilus, go thy way! Had I a sister were a grace, or a daughter a goddess, he should take his choice. O admirable man! Paris? Paris is dirt to him; and, I warrant, Helen, to change, would give an eye to boot.

Common Soldiers *pass*

CRES. Here come more.

PAN. Asses, fools, dolts! chaff and bran, chaff and bran! porridge after meat! I could live and die i' the eyes of Troilus. Ne'er look, ne'er look; the eagles are gone: crows and daws, crows and daws! I had rather be such a man as Troilus than Agamemnon and all Greece.

CRES. There is among the Greeks Achilles, a better man than Troilus.

PAN. Achilles! a drayman, a porter, a very camel.

CRES. Well, well.

PAN. Well, well! Why, have you any discretion? have you any eyes? do you know what a man is? Is not birth, beauty, good shape, discourse, manhood, learning, gentleness, virtue, youth, liberality, and such like, the spice and salt that season a man?

---

231 *an eye*] Thus the Quarto. The Folios read *money*.

**Cres.** Ay, a minced man: and then to be baked with no date in the pie, for then the man's date is out.

**Pan.** You are such a woman! one knows not at what ward you lie.

**Cres.** Upon my back, to defend my belly; upon my wit, to defend my wiles; upon my secrecy, to defend mine honesty; my mask, to defend my beauty; and you, to defend all these: and at all these wards I lie, at a thousand watches.

**Pan.** Say one of your watches.

**Cres.** Nay, I'll watch you for that; and that's one of the chiefest of them too: if I cannot ward what I would not have hit, I can watch you for telling how I took the blow; unless it swell past hiding, and then it's past watching.

**Pan.** You are such another!

*Enter* Troilus's Boy

**Boy.** Sir, my lord would instantly speak with you.

**Pan.** Where?

**Boy.** At your own house; there he unarms him.

**Pan.** Good boy, tell him I come. [*Exit Boy*] I doubt he be hurt. Fare ye well, good niece.

---

248 *minced*] affected, with a pun on the word in the phrase "mince-pie."

249 *no date . . . date is out*] Dates were common ingredients of Elizabethan pastry; "the man's date is out" means "the man's term of life is done." For the pun cf. *All's Well*, I, i, 147 and note.

250–251 *at what ward you lie*] what posture of defence you assume; a technical phrase in fencing.

254 *honesty*] chastity.

260 *for telling*] lest you tell.

CRES. Adieu, uncle.
PAN. I will be with you, niece, by and by.
CRES. To bring, uncle?
PAN. Ay, a token from Troilus.
CRES. By the same token, you are a bawd.
[*Exit Pandarus.*
Words, vows, gifts, tears, and love's full sacrifice,
He offers in another's enterprise:
But more in Troilus thousand fold I see
Than in the glass of Pandar's praise may be,
Yet hold I off. Women are angels, wooing:
Things won are done; joy's soul lies in the doing:
That she beloved knows nought that knows not this
Men prize the thing ungain'd more than it is:
That she was never yet that ever knew
Love got so sweet as when desire did sue:
Therefore this maxim out of love I teach:
Achievement is command; ungain'd, beseech.
Then though my heart's content firm love doth bear,
Nothing of that shall from mine eyes appear. [*Exeunt.*

---

270–272 *I will be . . . from Troilus*] This bantering slang is not very clear. But "to be with one to bring" was often used in the sense "to be even with one" or "to give as good as one gets," "to retaliate handsomely." Cressida tauntingly asks Pandarus if he thinks to get quits with her in their war of wits and Pandarus meets her challenge with a fresh quip.

279 *joy's soul . . . doing*] The essence of joy is in the act of enjoyment.

285 *Achievement . . . beseech*] When men have won us they become our commanders; before we are won, they are our suppliants.

286 *my heart's content . . . bear*] my heart's happiness rests on assured love.

## SCENE III — THE GRECIAN CAMP

### *BEFORE AGAMEMNON'S TENT*

*Sennet. Enter* AGAMEMNON, NESTOR, ULYSSES, MENELAUS, *with others*

AGAM. Princes,
What grief hath set the jaundice on your cheeks?
The ample proposition that hope makes
In all designs begun on earth below
Fails in the promised largeness: checks and disasters
Grow in the veins of actions highest rear'd,
As knots, by the conflux of meeting sap,
Infect the sound pine and divert his grain
Tortive and errant from his course of growth.
Nor, princes, is it matter new to us
That we come short of our suppose so far
That after seven years' siege yet Troy walls stand;
Sith every action that hath gone before,
Whereof we have record, trial did draw
Bias and thwart, not answering the aim

---

3 *The ample proposition*] The ample promise; "the promised largeness" (line 5) means much the same thing, although there is an inversion of adjective and substantive.

9 *Tortive and errant*] Twisted and astray. The result is that the wood is cross-grained.

11 *suppose*] supposition, expectation.

14–15 *draw Bias and thwart*] turn awry, and cause to deviate from the straight line. Both "bias" and "thwart" are technical terms in the game of bowls, and refer to the checks which prevent the bowl from taking the straight course.

And that unbodied figure of the thought
That gave 't surmised shape. Why then, you princes,
Do you with cheeks abash'd behold our works,
And call them shames? which are indeed nought else
But the protractive trials of great Jove
To find persistive constancy in men:
The fineness of which metal is not found
In fortune's love; for then the bold and coward,
The wise and fool, the artist and unread,
The hard and soft, seem all affined and kin:
But in the wind and tempest of her frown,
Distinction with a broad and powerful fan,
Puffing at all, winnows the light away,
And what hath mass or matter, by itself
Lies rich in virtue and unmingled.

NEST. With due observance of thy godlike seat,
Great Agamemnon, Nestor shall apply
Thy latest words. In the reproof of chance
Lies the true proof of men: the sea being smooth,
How many shallow bauble boats dare sail
Upon her patient breast, making their way
With those of nobler bulk!
But let the ruffian Boreas once enrage
The gentle Thetis, and anon behold

---

19 *call them shames*] Thus the Quarto. The Folios read *thinke them shame*. "Them" obviously refers to "our works."

25 *affined*] of affinity to one another.

27 *broad*] Thus the Quarto. The Folios read *loud*.

33 *the reproof of chance*] the resistance to chance.

38 *Boreas*] the north wind; Aquilon is similarly used IV, v, 9, *infra*.

39 *Thetis*] a sea nymph; here put for the sea. Cf. *Pericles*, IV, iv, 39.

The strong-ribb'd bark through liquid mountains cut,
Bounding between the two moist elements,
Like Perseus' horse: where's then the saucy boat,
Whose weak untimber'd sides but even now
Co-rivall'd greatness? either to harbour fled,
Or made a toast for Neptune. Even so
Doth valour's show and valour's worth divide
In storms of fortune: for in her ray and brightness
The herd hath more annoyance by the breese
Than by the tiger; but when the splitting wind
Makes flexible the knees of knotted oaks,
And flies fled under shade, why then the thing of courage
As roused with rage with rage doth sympathize,
And with an accent tuned in selfsame key
Retorts to chiding fortune.
ULYSS. Agamemnon,
Thou great commander, nerve and bone of Greece,
Heart of our numbers, soul and only spirit,
In whom the tempers and the minds of all

---

Tethys, wife of Oceanus, is similarly used by Ovid, *Metam.*, II, 69, 509.

42 *Like Perseus' horse*] Lydgate mentions the old fable that when Perseus struck off Medusa's head, the flying horse Pegasus was "engendered of the blood." Cf. IV, v, 186, *infra*.

45 *a toast for Neptune*] a sop for Neptune. It was the old custom to soak in wine a piece of toast, to which is here likened "the saucy boat" on the overwhelming ocean.

48 *breese*] gadfly.

51–52 *the thing of courage . . . sympathize*] the tiger rages and roars furiously amid the fury of storms.

54 *Retorts*] Dyce's emendation of the original reading *Retires*.

Should be shut up, hear what Ulysses speaks.
Besides the applause and approbation
The which, [*To Agamemnon*] most mighty for thy place and sway,
[*To Nestor*] And thou most reverend for thy stretch'd-out life,
I give to both your speeches, which were such
As Agamemnon and the hand of Greece
Should hold up high in brass, and such again
As venerable Nestor, hatch'd in silver,
Should with a bond of air, strong as the axletree
On which heaven rides, knit all the Greekish ears
To his experienced tongue, yet let it please both,
Thou great, and wise, to hear Ulysses speak.
AGAM. Speak, Prince of Ithaca; and be 't of less expect
That matter needless, of importless burthen,

---

58 *shut up*] embodied.

62–64 *such As Agamemnon . . . Should hold up high in brass*] such that the spoken word of Agamemnon, who is the guiding hand of Greece, should be engraved in high relief on tablets of brass. "And the hand of Greece" is a descriptive clause in apposition with Agamemnon. At line 143, *infra*, Achilles is called "the *forehand* of our host."

65–68 *venerable Nestor . . . tongue*] The spoken word of old Nestor, engraved in silver (the hue of his hair), should enchain, by bonds strong as the axis of the firmament, the hearing of all the Greeks. "Hatch'd in silver" is analogous to "high in brass" of the previous line, "hatch'd" being a familiar term in the art of engraving. There is also possibly an implied allusion to Nestor's silver hair.

70–74 *Speak . . . oracle*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos omit the speech.

70 *of less expect*] of smaller expectation.

Divide thy lips, than we are confident,
When rank Thersites opes his mastic jaws,
We shall hear music, wit and oracle.
  ULYSS. Troy, yet upon his basis, had been down,
And the great Hector's sword had lack'd a master,
But for these instances.
The specialty of rule hath been neglected:
And, look, how many Grecian tents do stand
Hollow upon this plain, so many hollow factions.
When that the general is not like the hive
To whom the foragers shall all repair,
What honey is expected? Degree being vizarded,
The unworthiest shows as fairly in the mask.
The heavens themselves, the planets and this centre,
Observe degree, priority and place,
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
Office and custom, in all line of order:

73 *mastic jaws*] jaws full of rotten teeth, "mastic" being the gum ordinarily used for stopping decayed teeth. Cf. Lyly's *Midas*, III, ii, 138 *seq.*

> *Petulus.* "O my teeth! deare barber, ease me . . .
> O! what will rid me of this paine? . . . .
> *Licio.* Take *masticke* else.
> *Petulus.* *Mastick* '*s* a patch.
> *Masticke* does many a foole's face catch."

Agamemnon pays Ulysses a somewhat inverted compliment.

77 *these instances*] the proofs that follow.

78 *The specialty of rule*] The essential quality attaching to rule.

81 *like the hive*] like the rallying-point, which the hive is for the bees.

85 *this centre*] this earth, which according to the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, held the central place in the universe. Cf. III, ii, 175, *infra*.

87 *Insisture*] Persistency, permanent uniformity of motion.

And therefore is the glorious planet Sol
In noble eminence enthroned and sphered
Amidst the other; whose medicinable eye
Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil,
And posts like the commandment of a king,
Sans check to good and bad: but when the planets
In evil mixture to disorder wander,
What plagues and what portents, what mutiny,
What raging of the sea, shaking of earth,
Commotion in the winds, frights, changes, horrors,
Divert and crack, rend and deracinate
The unity and married calm of states
Quite from their fixure! O, when degree is shaked,
Which is the ladder to all high designs,
The enterprise is sick! How could communities,
Degrees in schools and brotherhoods in cities,
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
The primogenitive and due of birth,
Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,
But by degree, stand in authentic place?
Take but degree away, untune that string,

---

91 *medicinable*] medicinal, curative.

92 *aspects*] astrological influences.

99 *deracinate*] root up.

100 *married calm*] calm of close lawful union.

101 *fixure*] fixity, stability. Cf. *Wint. Tale*, V, iii, 67: "The *fixure* of her eye has motion in it."

104 *brotherhoods*] guilds or fraternities.

105 *Peaceful commerce . . . shores*] The accent is on the second syllable of "commerce" and on the first and third syllables of "dividable," which means "divided," "widely parted."

106 *primogenitive*] Right of primogeniture.

And, hark, what discord follows! each thing meets
In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters
Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores,
And make a sop of all this solid globe:
Strength should be lord of imbecility,
And the rude son should strike his father dead:
Force should be right; or rather, right and wrong,
Between whose endless jar justice resides,
Should lose their names, and so should justice too.
Then every thing includes itself in power,
Power into will, will into appetite;
And appetite, an universal wolf,
So doubly seconded with will and power,
Must make perforce an universal prey,
And last eat up himself. Great Agamemnon,
This chaos, when degree is suffocate,
Follows the choking.
And this neglection of degree it is
That by a pace goes backward, with a purpose
It hath to climb. The general's disdain'd
By him one step below; he by the next;
That next by him beneath: so every step,
Exampled by the first pace that is sick

---

111 *mere oppugnancy*] utter antagonism.

114 *imbecility*] infirmity, weakness.

127–129 *And this neglection . . . climb*] And this neglect or defiance of degree passes step by step from the foremost rank to ranks behind, with the design on the part of each man to aggrandise himself. Everybody is slighted by him who is his immediate inferior. "Neglection" is a rare form of "neglect."

132–133 *Exampled . . . superior*] Following the example of the first rank that is irritated by the one just ahead of it.

Of his superior, grows to an envious fever
Of pale and bloodless emulation:
And 't is this fever that keeps Troy on foot,
Not her own sinews. To end a tale of length,
Troy in our weakness stands, not in her strength.
  **Nest.** Most wisely hath Ulysses here discover'd
The fever whereof all our power is sick.
  **Agam.** The nature of the sickness found, Ulysses,
What is the remedy?
  **Ulyss.** The great Achilles, whom opinion crowns
The sinew and the forehand of our host,
Having his ear full of his airy fame,
Grows dainty of his worth, and in his tent
Lies mocking our designs: with him Patroclus,
Upon a lazy bed, the livelong day
Breaks scurril jests,
And with ridiculous and awkward action,
Which, slanderer, he imitation calls,
He pageants us. Sometime, great Agamemnon,
Thy topless deputation he puts on;
And, like a strutting player, whose conceit
Lies in his hamstring, and doth think it rich
To hear the wooden dialogue and sound

---

134 *bloodless*] sluggish, malignant; not vigorous nor active.

143 *the forehand*] the guiding hand or main-stay. Cf. line 63, *supra*, "the *hand* of Greece."

144 *airy fame*] fame living in air or words.

151 *He pageants us*] He makes an exhibition of us, mimics us.

152 *Thy topless deputation*] The supreme and arbitrary power deputed (by his fellow kings) to Agamemnon as chief of the army.

155 *the wooden dialogue and sound*] the sound of the actor's foot strutting on the wooden stage.

'Twixt his stretch'd footing and the scaffoldage,
Such to-be-pitied and o'er-wrested seeming
He acts thy greatness in: and when he speaks,
'T is like a chime a-mending; with terms unsquared,
Which, from the tongue of roaring Typhon dropp'd,
Would seem hyperboles. At this fusty stuff,
The large Achilles, on his press'd bed lolling,
From his deep chest laughs out a loud applause;
Cries "Excellent! 't is Agamemnon just.
Now play me Nestor; hem, and stroke thy beard,
As he being dress'd to some oration."
That's done; as near as the extremest ends
Of parallels, as like as Vulcan and his wife:
Yet god Achilles still cries "Excellent!
'T is Nestor right. Now play him me, Patroclus,
Arming to answer in a night alarm."
And then, forsooth, the faint defects of age
Must be the scene of mirth; to cough and spit,

---

156 *stretch'd footing and the scaffoldage*] strained or stilted stride *and* the stage of the theatre.

157 *to-be-pitied and o'er-wrested seeming*] pitiable and exaggerated guise. *O'erwrested* (*i. e.*, overwound) is Pope's emendation of *ore-rested*, the reading of the Quartos and Folios. "Wrest" is the instrument for tuning the harps by straining the wires. Cf. III, iii, 23, *infra*.

159 *unsquared*] inharmonious, rough, used of stones for building.

160 *Typhon*] a giant of classical mythology. Ovid in *Metam.*, V, 321, calls the monster "Typhoeus," which Golding translates "Typhon." Both forms have classical authority.

161 *fusty*] musty, mouldy.

166 *dress'd to some oration*] ready to speak an oration.

167–168 *as near as . . . wife*] with no resemblance at all to the truth, as unlike as Vulcan and Venus his wife.

171 *to answer in a night alarm*] to meet an attack by night.

And, with a palsy fumbling on his gorget,
Shake in and out the rivet: and at this sport
Sir Valour dies; cries "O, enough, Patroclus;
Or give me ribs of steel! I shall split all
In pleasure of my spleen." And in this fashion,
All our abilities, gifts, natures, shapes,
Severals and generals of grace exact,
Achievements, plots, orders, preventions,
Excitements to the field or speech for truce,
Success or loss, what is or is not, serves
As stuff for these two to make paradoxes.
NEST. And in the imitation of these twain,
Who, as Ulysses says, opinion crowns
With an imperial voice, many are infect.
Ajax is grown self-will'd, and bears his head
In such a rein, in full as proud a place
As broad Achilles; keeps his tent like him;
Makes factious feasts; rails on our state of war
Bold as an oracle, and sets Thersites,
A slave whose gall coins slanders like a mint,

---

174 *gorget*] the armour for the throat or neck.

175 *Shake in . . . rivet*] With his trembling hand move the fastening pin in and out of its place.

180 *Severals and generals of grace exact*] Precise marks of our individual and general merit.

181 *preventions*] precautions.

184 *paradoxes*] absurdities.

185 *in the imitation*] owing to the imitation.

189 *In such a rein*] So haughtily, with such an air of disdain, like a spirited warhorse tightly reined.

190 *broad*] puffed out with pride.

191 *our state of war*] our council of war.

To match us in comparisons with dirt,
To weaken and discredit our exposure,
How rank soever rounded in with danger.
  ULYSS. They tax our policy and call it cowardice,
Count wisdom as no member of the war,
Forestall prescience, and esteem no act
But that of hand: the still and mental parts
That do contrive how many hands shall strike
When fitness calls them on, and know by measure
Of their observant toil the enemies' weight,—
Why, this hath not a finger's dignity;
They call this bed-work mappery, closet-war:
So that the ram that batters down the wall,
For the great swing and rudeness of his poise,
They place before his hand that made the engine,

---

195-196 *To weaken . . . with danger*] To depreciate our ability to stand exposure to the enemy, however palpable is the danger by which we are surrounded.

199 *Forestall*] Precondemn.

204 *a finger's dignity*] the worth of a finger pointing the way.

205 *this bed-work mappery*] "Mappery," *i.e.*, the making of maps or plans, is unknown elsewhere in the literature of the time. With this punctuation "bed-work" is an epithet, meaning either "reposeful" (*i. e.*, of the character of work done at rest in bed), or "ground-work" ("bed" being used in the sense of "base" or "foundation" of a structure). If a comma be placed after "bed-work" (as is commonly done), that word would be a substantive, but might still be used seriously for "foundation" or "ground-work" to which "mappery" (with a scornful intention) and "closet-war" are in contemptuous apposition. This interpretation seems preferable to treating "bed-work" as itself a term of contempt, meaning "idling in bed" in apposition to "this."

Or those that with the fineness of their souls
By reason guide his execution.
Nest. Let this be granted, and Achilles' horse
Makes many Thetis' sons. [*Tucket.*
Agam. What trumpet? look, Menelaus.
Men. From Troy.

*Enter* Æneas

Agam. What would you 'fore our tent?
Æne. Is this great Agamemnon's tent, I pray you?
Agam. Even this.
Æne. May one that is a herald and a prince
Do a fair message to his kingly ears?
Agam. With surety stronger than Achilles' arm
'Fore all the Greekish heads, which with one voice
Call Agamemnon head and general.
Æne. Fair leave and large security. How may
A stranger to those most imperial looks
Know them from eyes of other mortals?
Agam. How!
Æne. Ay:
I ask, that I might waken reverence,
And bid the cheek be ready with a blush

---

209 *the fineness*] the subtle capacity.

212 *Makes many Thetis' sons*] is the equivalent of many Achilles. Thetis was mother of Achilles.

224 *A stranger . . . looks*] The war was in its seventh year, and the Trojan Æneas must have had many opportunities of making acquaintance with the personal appearance of the leader of the Greek army. Shakespeare apparently assumed that the Greek warriors concealed their features in close helmets. Cf. line 296, *infra* (Nestor's), "gold beaver" and IV, v, 195 (of Hector), "thy countenance, still lock'd in steel."

Modest as morning when she coldly eyes
The youthful Phœbus:
Which is that god in office, guiding men?
Which is the high and mighty Agamemnon?
Agam. This Trojan scorns us; or the men of Troy
Are ceremonious courtiers.
Æne. Courtiers as free, as debonair, unarm'd,
As bending angels; that's their fame in peace:
But when they would seem soldiers, they have galls,
Good arms, strong joints, true swords; and, Jove's accord,
Nothing so full of heart. But peace, Æneas,
Peace, Trojan; lay thy finger on thy lips!
The worthiness of praise distains his worth,
If that the praised himself bring the praise forth:
But what the repining enemy commends,
That breath fame blows; that praise, sole pure, transcends.
Agam. Sir, you of Troy, call you yourself Æneas?
Æne. Ay, Greek, that is my name.
Agam. What's your affair, I pray you?

---

229–230 *morning . . . Phœbus*] a strained reference to the purple light of the dawn (the goddess Aurora), awaiting the full rising of the sun-god (Phœbus Apollo).

237 *have galls*] have feelings of rancour.

238–239 *and, Jove's accord . . . heart*] and with Jove in accord or on their side (an ablative absolute, "Jove probante"), nothing is so full of courage.

241–242 *The worthiness . . . forth*] For the general sentiment that "self-praise is no recommendation," cf. II, iii, 150–153, *infra*, and *All 's Well*, I, iii, 5–7: "We . . . make foul the clearness of our deservings, when of ourselves we publish them."

ÆNE. Sir, pardon; 't is for Agamemnon's ears.
AGAM. He hears nought privately that comes from Troy.
ÆNE. Nor I from Troy come not to whisper him:
I bring a trumpet to awake his ear,
To set his sense on the attentive bent,
And then to speak.
AGAM. Speak frankly as the wind;
It is not Agamemnon's sleeping hour:
That thou shalt know, Trojan, he is awake,
He tells thee so himself.
ÆNE. Trumpet, blow loud,
Send thy brass voice through all these lazy tents;
And every Greek of mettle, let him know,
What Troy means fairly shall be spoke aloud.
[*Trumpet sounds.*
We have, great Agamemnon, here in Troy
A prince call'd Hector — Priam is his father —
Who in this dull and long-continued truce
Is rusty-grown: he bade me take a trumpet,
And to this purpose speak. Kings, princes, lords!
If there be one among the fair'st of Greece,
That holds his honour higher than his ease,
That seeks his praise more than he fears his peril,
That knows his valour and knows not his fear,
That loves his mistress more than in confession
With truant vows to her own lips he loves,

---

262 *long-continued truce*] Such a truce is inconsistent with the speech of Troilus, I, i, 1, *seq.*, and the statement (I, ii, 32–33), that "yesterday (Ajax) coped Hector in the battle."

269–270 *in confession . . . vows*] in profession while making idle vows.

And dare avow her beauty and her worth
In other arms than hers — to him this challenge.
Hector, in view of Trojans and of Greeks,
Shall make it good, or do his best to do it,
He hath a lady, wiser, fairer, truer,
Than ever Greek did compass in his arms;
And will to-morrow with his trumpet call
Midway between your tents and walls of Troy,
To rouse a Grecian that is true in love:
If any come, Hector shall honour him;
If none, he 'll say in Troy when he retires,
The Grecian dames are sunburnt and not worth
The splinter of a lance. Even so much.
  AGAM. This shall be told our lovers, Lord Æneas;
If none of them have soul in such a kind,
We left them all at home: but we are soldiers;
And may that soldier a mere recreant prove,
That means not, hath not, or is not in love!
If then one is, or hath, or means to be,
That one meets Hector; if none else, I am he.
  NEST. Tell him of Nestor, one that was a man
When Hector's grandsire suck'd: he is old now;
But if there be not in our Grecian host
One noble man that hath one spark of fire,
To answer for his love, tell him from me
I'll hide my silver beard in a gold beaver,

---

282 *sunburnt*] homely, plain. Cf. *Much Ado*, II, i, 287-288: "I am *sunburnt;* I may sit in a corner, and cry heigh-ho for a husband!"

288 *means not, hath not*] means not to be, hath not been.

293 *host*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *mould*, *i. e.*, nature, character.

And in my vantbrace put this wither'd brawn,
And meeting him will tell him that my lady
Was fairer than his grandam, and as chaste
As may be in the world: his youth in flood,
I'll prove this truth with my three drops of blood.
  ÆNE. Now heavens forbid such scarcity of youth!
  ULYSS. Amen.
  AGAM. Fair Lord Æneas, let me touch your hand;
To our pavilion shall I lead you, sir.
Achilles shall have word of this intent;
So shall each lord of Greece, from tent to tent:
Yourself shall feast with us before you go,
And find the welcome of a noble foe.
[*Exeunt all but Ulysses and Nestor.*
  ULYSS. Nestor!
  NEST. What says Ulysses?
  ULYSS. I have a young conception in my brain;
Be you my time to bring it to some shape.
  NEST. What is 't?
  ULYSS. This 't is:
Blunt wedges rive hard knots: the seeded pride
That hath to this maturity blown up
In rank Achilles must or now be cropp'd,
Or, shedding, breed a nursery of like evil,
To overbulk us all.

---

297 *vantbrace*] armour for the forearm; from the French "avantbras."

300 *his youth in flood*] though his youth is at its full strength.

313 *Be you my time . . . shape*] Play the ripening part of time for me in bringing this idea to mature shape.

316 *the seeded pride*] the pride that is prolific in seed.

319 *nursery*] plantation.

**Nest.** Well, and how?
**Ulyss.** This challenge that the gallant Hector sends,
However it is spread in general name,
Relates in purpose only to Achilles.
**Nest.** The purpose is perspicuous even as substance,
Whose grossness little characters sum up:
And, in the publication, make no strain,
But that Achilles, were his brain as barren
As banks of Libya, — though, Apollo knows,
'T is dry enough — will, with great speed of judgement,
Ay, with celerity, find Hector's purpose
Pointing on him.
**Ulyss.** And wake him to the answer, think you?
**Nest.** Yes, 't is most meet: who may you else oppose,
That can from Hector bring his honour off,
If not Achilles? Though 't be a sportful combat,
Yet in this trial much opinion dwells;
For here the Trojans taste our dear'st repute
With their finest palate: and trust to me, Ulysses,
Our imputation shall be oddly poised
In this wild action; for the success,

---

320 *overbulk us*] tower over us.

324–325 *The purpose . . . sum up*] The purpose is as plain as material property, the extent of which is indicated by little figures or ciphers. Cf. *Hen. V*, Act I, Prologue, 15–16: "a crooked figure may Attest in little place a million."

326 *And, in the publication . . . strain*] And when the challenge is published, (its meaning will) make no strain (on Achilles' intelligence).

336 *much opinion dwells*] much credit is at stake.

339 *Our imputation shall be oddly poised*] Our reputation shall be weighed unevenly, unequally, not in precise agreement with the circumstances.

340–342 *for the success . . . general*] for the issue, though really only

Although particular, shall give a scantling
Of good or bad unto the general;
And in such indexes, although small pricks
To their subsequent volumes, there is seen
The baby figure of the giant mass
Of things to come at large. It is supposed
He that meets Hector issues from our choice:
And choice, being mutual act of all our souls,
Makes merit her election, and doth boil,
As 't were from forth us all, a man distill'd
Out of our virtues; who miscarrying,
What heart from hence receives the conquering part,
To steel a strong opinion to themselves?
Which entertain'd, limbs are his instruments,
In no less working than are swords and bows
Directive by the limbs.

---

affecting an individual, shall lend a measure of good or ill report to the whole community. "Scantling" means "a small piece of anything."

343–346 *And in such indexes . . . large*] Preliminary tables of contents (found at the beginning of books), although they are small marks compared with the volume to which they are prefixed, indicate in miniature the great mass of what is to follow in full. "Indexes" may be either preliminary tables of contents or the "indexes" which then came at the opening of the volume.

349 *Makes merit her election*] Makes merit the object of her choice, seeks out the best man.

351–353 *who miscarrying . . . themselves*] if the man of her choice fail, what heart among us will draw from that misfortune any hope of playing the conqueror's rôle, so as to strengthen our self-confidence.

354–356 *Which . . . by the limbs*] Thus the Folio. The lines are omitted from the Quartos. This difficult passage seems to mean that when a man entertains confidence in himself and his champion, then his

ULYSS. Give pardon to my speech;
Therefore 't is meet Achilles meet not Hector.
Let us, like merchants, show our foulest wares,
And think, perchance, they'll sell; if not,
The lustre of the better yet to show,
Shall show the better. Do not consent
That ever Hector and Achilles meet;
For both our honour and our shame in this
Are dogg'd with two strange followers.
NEST. I see them not with my old eyes: what are they?
ULYSS. What glory our Achilles shares from Hector,
Were he not proud, we all should share with him:
But he already is too insolent;
And we were better parch in Afric sun
Than in the pride and salt scorn of his eyes,
Should he 'scape Hector fair: if he were foil'd,
Why then, we did our main opinion crush
In taint of our best man. No, make a lottery;
And by device let blockish Ajax draw

---

limbs are his responsive instruments, as alert and obedient to direction as the swords and bows which his limbs wield.

361–362 *The lustre . . . shew the better*] Thus the Folios. The Quarto reads, less satisfactorily, *the luster of the better shall exceed By shewing the worst first.* "Yet to show" of course means "yet to be shown."

371 *salt scorn*] bitter scorn.

373–374 *we did . . . our best man*] we should destroy our main credit with the disgrace of our best champion.

375 *let blockish Ajax*] Shakespeare followed Ovid, *Metam.*, XIII, in making Ajax throughout this play a self-willed and stupid braggart. Golding, translating Ovid, calls Ajax "dolt and grosse head,"

The sort to fight with Hector: among ourselves
Give him allowance for the better man;
For that will physic the great Myrmidon
Who broils in loud applause, and make him fall
His crest that prouder than blue Iris bends.
If the dull brainless Ajax come safe off,
We 'll dress him up in voices: if he fail,
Yet go we under our opinion still
That we have better men. But, hit or miss,
Our project's life this shape of sense assumes,
Ajax employ'd plucks down Achilles' plumes.
  NEST. Ulysses,
Now I begin to relish thy advice;
And I will give a taste of it forthwith
To Agamemnon: go we to him straight.
Two curs shall tame each other: pride alone
Must tarre the mastiffs on, as 't were their bone.

[*Exeunt.*

---

"having neither wit nor knowledge." Neither Homer nor his English adapters make Ajax a mere fool.

376 *The sort*] The lot.

377 *Give him allowance*] Represent him.

379 *Who broils . . . applause*] Who is warmed to fever heat by loud applause.

*fall*] let fall, lower.

380 *blue Iris*] the rainbow.

382 *dress him . . . voices*] trim him up, or adorn him with vociferous praise.

383 *go we under*] we may submit to, we may uphold.

392 *tarre the mastiffs on*] incite the dogs to fight.

## ACT SECOND — SCENE I

### *THE GRECIAN CAMP*

*Enter* AJAX *and* THERSITES

AJAX

THERSITES!

THER. Agamemnon — how if he had boils — full, all over, generally?

AJAX. Thersites!

THER. And those boils did run? — Say so, — did not the general run then? were not that a botchy core?

AJAX. Dog!

THER. Then would come some matter from him; I see none now.

AJAX. Thou bitch-wolf's son, canst thou not hear? Feel, then. [*Strikes him.*

---

2 *boils*] Theobald's correction of the old spelling *biles*.

6 *botchy core*] core or kernel of an ulcer or boil. Some pun on "core" and "corps," which is similarly pronounced, has been suggested.

**Ther.** The plague of Greece upon thee, thou mongrel beef-witted lord!

**Ajax.** Speak then, thou vinewed'st leaven, speak: I will beat thee into handsomeness.

**Ther.** I shall sooner rail thee into wit and holiness: but, I think, thy horse will sooner con an oration than thou learn a prayer without book. Thou canst strike, canst thou? a red murrain o' thy jade's tricks!

**Ajax.** Toadstool, learn me the proclamation.

**Ther.** Dost thou think I have no sense, thou strikest me thus?

**Ajax.** The proclamation!

**Ther.** Thou art proclaimed a fool, I think.

**Ajax.** Do not, porpentine, do not; my fingers itch.

**Ther.** I would thou didst itch from head to foot, and I had the scratching of thee; I would make thee the loathsomest scab in Greece. When thou art forth in the incursions, thou strikest as slow as another.

---

12 *The plague of Greece*] Apollo, in the Homeric story, had visited the Greek camp with a pestilence.

12–13 *mongrel beef-witted lord*] Ajax was a mongrel, because his father was a Greek and his mother a Trojan. Cf. I, ii, 13–14, note. For "beef-witted" cf. *Tw. Night*, I, iii, 80–82: "I am a great eater of beef, and I believe that does harm to my wit."

14 *vinewed'st leaven*] most mouldy leaven: Johnson's emendation of the Quarto *unsalted leaven*, which probably means "malignity without wit," and the Folio *whinid'st leaven*. "Vinew," (*i. e.*, mouldy) is not uncommon and survives in dialects as "vinny."

19 *a red murrain*] Cf. *Temp.*, I, ii, 364: "The *red* plague."

25 *porpentine*] a common form of "porcupine."

28–29 *When thou . . . incursions*] When you are engaged in the sorties against Troy.

AJAX. I say, the proclamation!

THER. Thou grumblest and railest every hour on Achilles, and thou art as full of envy at his greatness as Cerberus is at Proserpina's beauty, ay, that thou barkest at him.

AJAX. Mistress Thersites!

THER. Thou shouldst strike him.

AJAX. Cobloaf!

THER. He would pun thee into shivers with his fist, as a sailor breaks a biscuit.

AJAX. [*Beating him*] You whoreson cur!

THER. Do, do.

AJAX. Thou stool for a witch!

THER. Ay, do, do; thou sodden-witted lord! thou hast no more brain than I have in mine elbows; an assinego may tutor thee: thou scurvy-valiant ass! thou art here but to thrash Trojans; and thou art bought and sold among those of any wit, like a barbarian slave. If thou use to beat me, I will begin at thy heel and

---

33 *Cerberus . . . Proserpina's beauty*] There seems no classical authority for this alleged infatuation of Cerberus for Proserpine.

35 *him*] *i. e.*, Achilles.

36 *Cobloaf*] A crusty uneven loaf. Cf. V, i, 5, *infra:* "*crusty batch* of nature" and note.

37 *pun*] pound.

41 *Thou stool . . . witch*] Witches were tied to stools for purposes of torture.

43–44 *assinego*] a Portuguese word for "ass." Thus Pope. The early editions read *Asinico*, which is a Spanish diminutive of "asno," an ass. Both words seem to have been familiar in the Elizabethan vernacular.

45–46 *bought and sold*] made a fool of, deluded.

tell what thou art by inches, thou thing of no bowels, thou!

**AJAX.** You dog!

**THER.** You scurvy lord!

**AJAX.** [*Beating him*] You cur!

**THER.** Mars his idiot! do, rudeness; do, camel, do, do.

*Enter* ACHILLES *and* PATROCLUS

**ACHIL.** Why, how now, Ajax! wherefore do ye thus?
How now, Thersites! what's the matter, man?

**THER.** You see him there, do you?

**ACHIL.** Ay; what's the matter?

**THER.** Nay, look upon him.

**ACHIL.** So I do: what's the matter?

**THER.** Nay, but regard him well.

**ACHIL.** "Well!" why, so I do.

**THER.** But yet you look not well upon him; for, whosoever you take him to be, he is Ajax.

**ACHIL.** I know that, fool.

**THER.** Ay, but that fool knows not himself.

**AJAX.** Therefore I beat thee.

**THER.** Lo, lo, lo, lo, what modicums of wit he utters! his evasions have ears thus long. I have bobbed his brain more than he has beat my bones: I will buy nine sparrows for a penny, and his pia mater is not worth the

---

66 *modicums*] fragments.

67 *evasions . . . thus long*] his circuitous talk suggests asses' ears.
*bobbed*] buffeted; with some vague suggestion of deluding or tricking, in which sense the verb is used, III, i, 65, *infra*.

69 *pia mater*] a membrane covering the brain; commonly used for the brain itself.

ninth part of a sparrow. This lord, Achilles, Ajax, who wears his wit in his belly and his guts in his head, I'll tell you what I say of him.

Achil. What?

Ther. I say, this Ajax — [*Ajax offers to strike him.*

Achil. Nay, good Ajax.

Ther. Has not so much wit —

Achil. Nay, I must hold you.

Ther. As will stop the eye of Helen's needle, for whom he comes to fight.

Achil. Peace, fool!

Ther. I would have peace and quietness, but the fool will not: he there: that he: look you there!

Ajax. O thou damned cur! I shall —

Achil. Will you set your wit to a fool's?

Ther. No, I warrant you; for a fool's will shame it.

Patr. Good words, Thersites.

Achil. What's the quarrel?

Ajax. I bade the vile owl go learn me the tenour of the proclamation, and he rails upon me.

Ther. I serve thee not.

Ajax. Well, go to, go to.

Ther. I serve here voluntary.

Achil. Your last service was sufferance, 't was not voluntary; no man is beaten voluntary: Ajax was here the voluntary, and you as under an impress.

Ther. E'en so; a great deal of your wit too lies in

---

84 *set your wit to*] match your wit against. Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, III, i, 123: "*set his wit to* so foolish a bird."

95 *under an impress*] under enforced service.

your sinews, or else there be liars. Hector shall have a great catch, if he knock out either of your brains: a' were as good crack a fusty nut with no kernel.

ACHIL. What, with me too, Thersites?

THER. There 's Ulysses and old Nestor, whose wit was mouldy ere your grandsires had nails on their toes, yoke you like draught-oxen, and make you plough up the wars.

ACHIL. What? what?

THER. Yes, good sooth: to, Achilles! to, Ajax! to!

AJAX. I shall cut out your tongue.

THER. 'T is no matter; I shall speak as much as thou afterwards.

PATR. No more words, Thersites; peace!

THER. I will hold my peace when Achilles' brooch bids me, shall I?

ACHIL. There's for you, Patroclus.

THER. I will see you hanged, like clotpoles, ere I come any more to your tents: I will keep where there is wit stirring, and leave the faction of fools. [*Exit.*

PATR. A good riddance.

ACHIL. Marry, this, sir, is proclaim'd through all our host:
That Hector, by the fifth hour of the sun,
Will with a trumpet 'twixt our tents and Troy
To-morrow morning call some knight to arms

---

105 *to . . . to . . . to!*] The preposition is used like an imperative exclamation, "get on, get on! gee-up!" addressed to "draught-oxen."

110 *brooch*] ornament, hanger on. Thus the old editions. Rowe substituted *brach*, *i. e.*, bitch. Cf. V, i, 16, *infra.*

That hath a stomach, and such a one that dare
Maintain — I know not what: 't is trash. Farewell.
Ajax. Farewell. Who shall answer him?
Achil. I know not; 't is put to lottery; otherwise
He knew his man.
Ajax. O, meaning you. I will go learn more of it.
[*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II — TROY

### *A ROOM IN PRIAM'S PALACE*

*Enter* Priam, Hector, Troilus, Paris, *and* Helenus

Pri. After so many hours, lives, speeches spent,
Thus once again says Nestor from the Greeks:
"Deliver Helen, and all damage else,
As honour, loss of time, travail, expense,
Wounds, friends, and what else dear that is consumed
In hot digestion of this cormorant war,
Shall be struck off." Hector, what say you to't?
Hect. Though no man lesser fears the Greeks than I
As far as toucheth my particular,
Yet, dread Priam,
There is no lady of more softer bowels,
More spongy to suck in the sense of fear,
More ready to cry out "Who knows what follows?"
Than Hector is: the wound of peace is surety,

---

121 *a stomach*] an appetite for fighting.

9 *my particular*] my individual sentiment.

14–15 *surety, Surety secure:*] over-confidence, false security, which is careless of peril.

Surety secure: but modest doubt is call'd
The beacon of the wise, the tent that searches
To the bottom of the worst. Let Helen go.
Since the first sword was drawn about this question,
Every tithe soul, 'mongst many thousand dismes,
Hath been as dear as Helen; I mean, of ours:
If we have lost so many tenths of ours,
To guard a thing not ours, nor worth to us,
Had it our name, the value of one ten,
What merit's in that reason which denies
The yielding of her up?
  TRO. Fie, fie, my brother!
Weigh you the worth and honour of a king,
So great as our dread father, in a scale
Of common ounces? will you with counters sum
The past proportion of his infinite?
And buckle in a waist most fathomless
With spans and inches so diminutive
As fears and reasons? fie, for godly shame!
  HEL. No marvel, though you bite so sharp at reasons,
You are so empty of them. Should not our father
Bear the great sway of his affairs with reasons,
Because your speech hath none that tells him so?

---

16 *the tent*] the surgical probe.

19 *tithe . . . dismes*] Both "tithe" and "disme" mean a tenth, and are words applicable to every tenth man on the roll-call of an army, whose lives were always liable to be sacrificed to the exigencies of war.

22-23 *nor worth . . . the value of one ten*] nor, were Helen a Trojan woman instead of a Greek, would she be to us Trojans of the value of a single one of our soldiers.

29 *The past proportion of his infinite*] his infinite, illimitable immensity.

TRO. You are for dreams and slumbers, brother priest;
You fur your gloves with reason. Here are your reasons:
You know an enemy intends you harm;
You know a sword employ'd is perilous,
And reason flies the object of all harm:
Who marvels then, when Helenus beholds
A Grecian and his sword, if he do set
The very wings of reason to his heels,
And fly like chidden Mercury from Jove,
Or like a star disorb'd? Nay, if we talk of reason,
Let's shut our gates, and sleep: manhood and honour
Should have hare hearts, would they but fat their thoughts
With this cramm'd reason: reason and respect
Make livers pale and lustihood deject.

HECT. Brother, she is not worth what she doth cost
The holding.

TRO. What's aught, but as 't is valued?

HECT. But value dwells not in particular will;
It holds his estimate and dignity
As well wherein 't is precious of itself

---

46 *a star disorb'd*] a star out of, or straying from its sphere. The orb of a star was the hollow spherical globe, in which, according to the old system of astronomy, it was believed to be enclosed.

49 *reason and respect*] anxious fear of consequences. Cf. *Lucrece*, 275: "*Respect and reason* wait on wrinkled age!"

52 *The holding*] To hold or keep.

54–56 *It holds . . . the prizer*] "His estimate and dignity" means "its estimation and worth." "Prizer" means "valuer" or "appraiser." The sentence means that the value of a thing depends not alone on its inherent worth, but on the personal temperament of the valuer.

As in the prizer: 't is mad idolatry
To make the service greater than the god;
And the will dotes, that is attributive
To what infectiously itself affects,
Without some image of the affected merit.
TRO. I take to-day a wife, and my election
Is led on in the conduct of my will;
My will enkindled by mine eyes and ears,
Two traded pilots 'twixt the dangerous shores
Of will and judgement: how may I avoid,
Although my will distaste what it elected,
The wife I chose? there can be no evasion
To blench from this, and to stand firm by honour.
We turn not back the silks upon the merchant
When we have soil'd them, nor the remainder viands
We do not throw in unrespective sieve,
Because we now are full. It was thought meet
Paris should do some vengeance on the Greeks:
Your breath of full consent bellied his sails;

---

58–60 *And the will dotes . . . merit*] The will is weak and foolish that attributes to an object qualities which it excessively admires, when there is no semblance of the favoured merit in the object itself. *Attributive* is the Quarto reading, for which the Folios substitute *inclineable.*

62 *in the conduct of my will*] under the guidance of my free will. But "will" (as in lines 63 and 65, *infra*) here has much of the significance of "lust" or "sensual passion."

64 *traded*] professional, expert.

67–68 *no evasion To blench*] no means of escape so as to shrink.

71 *unrespective sieve*] receptacle for things of no account, common voider. Thus the Quartos. The First Folio reads *same* for *sieve;* the other Folios read *place; sink* has been suggested for *sieve.* But the latter was often applied to the basket, in which refuse was collected.

The seas and winds, old wranglers, took a truce,
And did him service: he touch'd the ports desired;
And for an old aunt whom the Greeks held captive
He brought a Grecian queen, whose youth and freshness
Wrinkles Apollo's and makes stale the morning.
Why keep we her? the Grecians keep our aunt:
Is she worth keeping? why, she is a pearl,
Whose price hath launch'd above a thousand ships,
And turn'd crown'd kings to merchants.
If you'll avouch 't was wisdom Paris went,
As you must needs, for you all cried "Go, go,"
If you'll confess he brought home noble prize,
As you must needs, for you all clapp'd your hands,
And cried "Inestimable!" why do you now
The issue of your proper wisdoms rate,
And do a deed that Fortune never did,
Beggar the estimation which you prized
Richer than sea and land? O, theft most base,
That we have stol'n what we do fear to keep!
But thieves unworthy of a thing so stol'n,

---

77 *an old aunt*] A reference to Hesione, sister of Priam, and thus Paris's aunt, who had been taken prisoner by Hercules in his attack on Troy and had been given as wife to Telamon, king of Salamis, by whom she was mother of Ajax. Cf. IV, v, 120, *infra*, and note.

79 *Wrinkles Apollo's*] Makes Apollo wrinkled or ugly by comparison. *stale*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read, less forcibly, *pale*.

82 *Whose price . . . ships*] A reminiscence of Marlowe's famous apostrophe to Helen (*Faustus*, V, iii, 91): "Was this the face that *launch'd a thousand ships?*"

89 *rate*] censure.

90 *and do a deed . . . never did*] and act with greater fickleness than Fortune ever did.

That in their country did them that disgrace,
We fear to warrant in our native place!
  CAS. [*Within*] Cry, Trojans, cry!
  PRI. What noise? what shriek is this?
  TRO. 'T is our mad sister, I do know her voice.
  CAS. [*Within*] Cry, Trojans!
  HECT. It is Cassandra.

*Enter* CASSANDRA, *raving, with her hair about her ears*

  CAS. Cry, Trojans, cry! lend me ten thousand eyes,
And I will fill them with prophetic tears.
  HECT. Peace, sister, peace!
  CAS. Virgins and boys, mid age and wrinkled eld,
Soft infancy, that nothing canst but cry,
Add to my clamours! let us pay betimes
A moiety of that mass of moan to come.
Cry, Trojans, cry! practise your eyes with tears!
Troy must not be, nor goodly Ilion stand;
Our firebrand brother, Paris, burns us all.
Cry, Trojans, cry! a Helen and a woe:
Cry, cry! Troy burns, or else let Helen go. [*Exit.*
  HECT. Now, youthful Troilus, do not these high strains
Of divination in our sister work

---

95–96 *That in their country . . . place*] (a thing) the theft of which did the Greeks in their own land such injury to their fame as we shrink from justifying at home.

104 *eld*] old age. Theobald's emendation of the Quarto *elders*, and the Folio *old*.

109 *Ilion*] See note on I, i, 100, *supra*.

110 *Our firebrand brother, Paris*] Paris's mother, Hecuba, dreamt before his birth that she would be delivered of a firebrand or lighted torch.

Some touches of remorse? or is your blood
So madly hot that no discourse of reason,
Nor fear of bad success in a bad cause,
Can qualify the same?
**Tro.** Why, brother Hector,
We may not think the justness of each act
Such and no other than event doth form it;
Nor once deject the courage of our minds,
Because Cassandra's mad: her brain-sick raptures
Cannot distaste the goodness of a quarrel
Which hath our several honours all engaged
To make it gracious. For my private part,
I am no more touch'd than all Priam's sons:
And Jove forbid there should be done amongst us
Such things as might offend the weakest spleen
To fight for and maintain!
**Par.** Else might the world convince of levity
As well my undertakings as your counsels:
But I attest the gods, your full consent
Gave wings to my propension, and cut off
All fears attending on so dire a project.
For what, alas, can these my single arms?
What propugnation is in one man's valour,
To stand the push and enmity of those

---

117 *bad success*] bad issue or result.
123 *distaste*] spoil the taste of.
125 *To make it gracious*] To show it to advantage, to set it off.
128 *weakest spleen*] feeblest heart or spirit.
130 *convince*] convict.
133 *propension*] propensity, inclination. Cf. line 190, *infra*.
136 *propugnation*] force of resistance.

This quarrel would excite? Yet, I protest,
Were I alone to pass the difficulties,
And had as ample power as I have will,
Paris should ne'er retract what he hath done,
Nor faint in the pursuit.
  PRI. Paris, you speak
Like one besotted on your sweet delights:
You have the honey still, but these the gall;
So to be valiant is no praise at all.
  PAR. Sir, I propose not merely to myself
The pleasures such a beauty brings with it;
But I would have the soil of her fair rape
Wiped off in honourable keeping her.
What treason were it to the ransack'd queen,
Disgrace to your great worths, and shame to me,
Now to deliver her possession up
On terms of base compulsion! Can it be
That so degenerate a strain as this
Should once set footing in your generous bosoms?
There 's not the meanest spirit on our party,
Without a heart to dare, or sword to draw,
When Helen is defended, nor none so noble,
Whose life were ill bestow'd, or death unfamed,
Where Helen is the subject: then, I say,
Well may we fight for her, whom, we know well,
The world's large spaces cannot parallel.
  HECT. Paris and Troilus, you have both said well;

---

148 *rape*] capture, carrying off; used here without any implication of sexual violence.

150 *ransack'd*] forcibly seized or captured.

154 *strain*] impulse, sentiment.

And on the cause and question now in hand
Have glozed, but superficially; not much
Unlike young men, whom Aristotle thought
Unfit to hear moral philosophy.
The reasons you allege do more conduce
To the hot passion of distemper'd blood,
Than to make up a free determination
'Twixt right and wrong; for pleasure and revenge
Have ears more deaf than adders to the voice
Of any true decision. Nature craves
All dues be render'd to their owners: now,
What nearer debt in all humanity
Than wife is to the husband? If this law
Of nature be corrupted through affection,

---

165 *glozed*] speciously explained or expounded.

166–167 *whom Aristotle . . . moral philosophy*] Aristotle, whom it is a very obvious anachronism to mention here, in his *Nicomachæan Ethics* writes that young men are unfitted for the study of "*political* [not *moral*] philosophy." But the context shows that Aristotle had in mind the ethics of civil society which are indistinguishable from morals. The Aristotelian maxim, in the slightly irregular shape that Shakespeare adopts here, long enjoyed proverbial currency in Western Europe. Erasmus quotes it thus in his *Colloquia* (1531), and many French and Italian writers follow his example. Bacon in his *Advancement of Learning* (1605), Bk. II, p. 255 (*ed.* Kitchin), also cites Aristotle to the effect that young men are not fit auditors of *moral* philosophy. Sceptics of Shakespeare's responsibility for the plays have made much of this last coincidence, in ignorance of the universal vogue of the Aristotelian maxim in the emended shape throughout European literature of the sixteenth century.

172 *ears more deaf than adders*] an old superstition. Cf. *Psalms*, lviii, 4, "like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear," and *2 Hen. VI*, III, ii, 76.

177 *through affection*] by the working of carnal affection or lust.

And that great minds, of partial indulgence
To their benumbed wills, resist the same,
There is a law in each well-order'd nation
To curb those raging appetites that are
Most disobedient and refractory.
If Helen then be wife to Sparta's king,
As it is known she is, these moral laws
Of nature and of nations speak aloud
To have her back return'd: thus to persist
In doing wrong extenuates not wrong,
But makes it much more heavy. Hector's opinion
Is this in way of truth: yet, ne'ertheless,
My spritely brethren, I propend to you
In resolution to keep Helen still;
For 't is a cause that hath no mean dependance
Upon our joint and several dignities.
TRO. Why, there you touch'd the life of our design:
Were it not glory that we more affected
Than the performance of our heaving spleens,
I would not wish a drop of Trojan blood
Spent more in her defence. But, worthy Hector,
She is a theme of honour and renown;
A spur to valiant and magnanimous deeds,

---

178–179 *of partial indulgence . . . wills*] through the inequitable indulgence of their desires, numbed to righteous considerations.

190–191 *propend . . . resolution*] incline to your resolve. Cf. "propension," line 133, *supra*.

192–193 *hath no mean . . . dignities*] has important concern with our collective and individual honour.

196 *the performance . . . spleens*] the mere indulgence of our swelling angry passions.

Whose present courage may beat down our foes,
And fame in time to come canonize us:
For, I presume, brave Hector would not lose
So rich advantage of a promised glory
As smiles upon the forehead of this action
For the wide world's revenue.
  Hect. I am yours,
You valiant offspring of great Priamus.
I have a roisting challenge sent amongst
The dull and factious nobles of the Greeks,
Will strike amazement to their drowsy spirits:
I was advertised their great general slept,
Whilst emulation in the army crept:
This, I presume, will wake him. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE III — THE GRECIAN CAMP

### *BEFORE THE TENT OF ACHILLES*

*Enter* Thersites, *solus*

Ther. How now, Thersites! what, lost in the labyrinth of thy fury! Shall the elephant Ajax carry it thus? he beats me, and I rail at him: O, worthy satisfaction! would it were otherwise; that I could beat him, whilst he railed at me. 'Sfoot, I'll learn to conjure and raise devils, but I'll see some issue of my spiteful execrations.

---

202 *canonize*] invariably accented by Shakespeare on the second syllable.
208 *roisting*] blustering, swaggering.
212 *emulation*] envy, jealousy, factiousness.
5 *'Sfoot*] God's foot. A common oath.

Then there 's Achilles, a rare enginer. If Troy be not taken till these two undermine it, the walls will stand till they fall of themselves. O thou great thunder-darter of Olympus, forget that thou art Jove, the king of gods, and, Mercury, lose all the serpentine craft of thy caduceus, if ye take not that little little less than little wit from them that they have! which short-armed ignorance itself knows is so abundant scarce, it will not in circumvention deliver a fly from a spider, without drawing their massy irons and cutting the web. After this, the vengeance on the whole camp! or, rather, the Neapolitan bone-ache! for that, methinks, is the curse dependant on those that war for a placket. I have said my prayers; and devil Envy say amen. What, ho! my Lord Achilles!

*Enter* PATROCLUS

PATR. Who's there? Thersites! Good Thersites, come in and rail.

THER. If I could ha' remembered a gilt counterfeit, thou wouldst not have slipped out of my contemplation:

---

7 *enginer*] The Elizabethan spelling of "engineer," a constructor of military works.

11–12 *caduceus*] The wand of Mercury or Hermes, round which two serpents were usually represented as entwining. Martial (Bk. VII, Epigram 74) writes of Mercury "Aurea cui *torto virga dracone* viret."

14 *in circumvention*] by dint of cunning.

15–16 *massy irons*] heavy swords.

17 *the Neapolitan bone-ache*] a name of venereal disease.

19 *a placket*] a petticoat.

23–24 *counterfeit . . . slipped out*] a punning phrase. A piece of bad money was variously called a "counterfeit" and a "slip." Cf. *Rom. & Jul.*, II, iv, 45–48.

but it is no matter; thyself upon thyself! The common curse of mankind, folly and ignorance, be thine in great revenue! heaven bless thee from a tutor, and discipline come not near thee! Let thy blood be thy direction till thy death! then if she that lays thee out says thou art a fair corse, I 'll be sworn and sworn upon't she never shrouded any but lazars. Amen. Where 's Achilles?

PATR. What, art thou devout? wast thou in prayer?

THER. Ay; the heavens hear me!

PATR. Amen.

*Enter* ACHILLES

ACHIL. Who 's there?

PATR. Thersites, my lord.

ACHIL. Where, where? Art thou come? why, my cheese, my digestion, why hast thou not served thyself in to my table so many meals? Come, what 's Agamemnon?

THER. Thy commander, Achilles: then tell me, Patroclus, what 's Achilles?

PATR. Thy lord, Thersites: then tell me, I pray thee, what's thyself?

THER. Thy knower, Patroclus: then tell me, Patroclus, what art thou?

PATR. Thou mayst tell that knowest.

ACHIL. O, tell, tell.

THER. I 'll decline the whole question. Agamemnon

---

28 *Let thy blood be thy direction*] Let thy passions be thy guide.

49 *decline*] repeat in detail; "decline" is used in the grammatical sense of going through the moods and tenses of verbs or cases of nouns.

commands Achilles; Achilles is my lord; I am Patroclus' knower, and Patroclus is a fool.

PATR. You rascal!

THER. Peace, fool! I have not done.

ACHIL. He is a privileged man. Proceed, Thersites.

THER. Agamemnon is a fool; Achilles is a fool; Thersites is a fool, and, as aforesaid, Patroclus is a fool.

ACHIL. Derive this; come.

THER. Agamemnon is a fool to offer to command Achilles; Achilles is a fool to be commanded of Agamemnon; Thersites is a fool to serve such a fool; and Patroclus is a fool positive.

PATR. Why am I a fool?

THER. Make that demand of the prover. It suffices me thou art. Look you, who comes here?

ACHIL. Patroclus, I'll speak with nobody. Come in with me, Thersites. [*Exit.*

THER. Here is such patchery, such juggling and such knavery! all the argument is a cuckold and a whore; a good quarrel to draw emulous factions and bleed to death upon. Now, the dry serpigo on the subject! and war and lechery confound all! [*Exit.*

---

52–56 *You rascal! . . . Patroclus is a fool*] Thus the Folios. The passage is omitted from the Quartos.

61 *positive*] the first degree of comparison; a technical term in grammar. Cf. line 49, *supra*.

63 *of the prover*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *to the Creator*.

67 *patchery*] cobbling, with a suggestion of deceitfulness.

70 *dry serpigo*] a repulsive disease marked by a dry eruption on the skin.

*Enter* Agamemnon, Ulysses, Nestor, Diomedes, *and* Ajax

Agam. Where is Achilles?

Patr. Within his tent; but ill-disposed, my lord.

Agam. Let it be known to him that we are here.
He shent our messengers; and we lay by
Our appertainments, visiting of him:
Let him be told so, lest perchance he think
We dare not move the question of our place,
Or know not what we are.

Patr. I shall say so to him. [*Exit.*

Ulyss. We saw him at the opening of his tent:
He is not sick.

Ajax. Yes, lion-sick, sick of proud heart: you may call it melancholy, if you will favour the man; but, by my head, 't is pride: but why, why? let him show us the cause. A word, my lord. [*Takes Agamemnon aside.*

Nest. What moves Ajax thus to bay at him?

Ulyss. Achilles hath inveigled his fool from him.

Nest. Who, Thersites?

Ulyss. He.

Nest. Then will Ajax lack matter, if he have lost his argument.

Ulyss. No, you see, he is his argument that has his argument, Achilles.

Nest. All the better; their fraction is more our wish

---

75 *shent*] rebuked or abused; an archaism common in Elizabethan poetry. *Shent* is Theobald's correction of the Quarto *sate* and the Folio *sent.*

75–76 *lay by Our appertainments*] divested ourselves of our dignity.

91–93 *argument . . . argument . . . argument*] theme of talk.

94–95 *fraction . . . faction*] disunion . . . union.

than their faction: but it was a strong composure a fool could disunite.

ULYSS. The amity that wisdom knits not, folly may easily untie.

*Re-enter* PATROCLUS

Here comes Patroclus.

NEST. No Achilles with him.

ULYSS. The elephant hath joints, but none for courtesy: his legs are legs for necessity, not for flexure.

PATR. Achilles bids me say, he is much sorry,
If anything more than your sport and pleasure
Did move your greatness and this noble state
To call upon him; he hopes it is no other
But for your health and your digestion sake,
An after-dinner's breath.

AGAM. Hear you, Patroclus:
We are too well acquainted with these answers:
But his evasion, wing'd thus swift with scorn,
Cannot outfly our apprehensions.
Much attribute he hath, and much the reason
Why we ascribe it to him: yet all his virtues,

95 *composure*] combination.

101–102 *The elephant . . . flexure*] It was a [illegible] belief that elephants could not bend the joints of the leg.

105 *this noble state*] this train of nobles in attendance.

108 *An after-dinner's breath*] Exercise or recreation after dinner. Cf. *Hamlet*, V, ii, 170: "it is the *breathing time* of day with me."

111 *Cannot outfly our apprehensions*] Cannot escape our attention, cannot fail to be fully appreciated by us.

112 *Much attribute he hath*] Much (repute) is attributed to him.

Not virtuously on his own part beheld,
Do in our eyes begin to lose their gloss,
Yea, like fair fruit in an unwholesome dish,
Are like to rot untasted. Go and tell him,
We come to speak with him; and you shall not sin,
If you do say we think him over-proud
And under-honest; in self-assumption greater
Than in the note of judgement; and worthier than himself
Here tend the savage strangeness he puts on,
Disguise the holy strength of their command,
And underwrite in an observing kind
His humorous predominance; yea, watch
His pettish lunes, his ebbs, his flows, as if
The passage and whole carriage of this action
Rode on his tide. Go tell him this, and add,
That if he overhold his price so much,

---

114 *Not virtuously . . . beheld*] Not viewed by himself with befitting modesty.

121 *Than in the note of judgement*] Than the verdict of good judges allows.

121–126 *worthier than himself . . . pettish lunes*] The construction is elliptical, and the language obscure. Agamemnon bids Patroclus tell Achilles that men worthier than himself are watching indulgently the rude aloofness he assumes, are dissembling the unblemished strength of their command (or power), and with tolerant consideration suffer his capricious moods of arrogance. Indeed, they are watching his pettish freaks of madness, etc.

126 *pettish lunes*] Thus Hanmer. The Folios read *pettish lines*; the Quarto *course, and time*. "Lunes" is often found in the sense of freaks of madness, though *lines* has been well defended as meaning "caprices."

We 'll none of him, but let him, like an engine
Not portable, lie under this report:
"Bring action hither, this cannot go to war:
A stirring dwarf we do allowance give
Before a sleeping giant:" tell him so.

PATR. I shall; and bring his answer presently. [*Exit.*

AGAM. In second voice we'll not be satisfied;
We come to speak with him. Ulysses, enter you.
[*Exit Ulysses.*

AJAX. What is he more than another?

AGAM. No more than what he thinks he is.

AJAX. Is he so much? Do you not think he thinks himself a better man than I am?

AGAM. No question.

AJAX. Will you subscribe his thought and say he is?

AGAM. No, noble Ajax; you are as strong, as valiant, as wise, no less noble, much more gentle and altogether more tractable.

AJAX. Why should a man be proud? How doth pride grow? I know not what pride is.

AGAM. Your mind is the clearer, Ajax, and your virtues the fairer. He that is proud eats up himself: pride is his own glass, his own trumpet, his own chronicle; and whatever praises itself but in the deed, devours the deed in the praise.

---

133 *we do allowance give*] we reckon of worth.

136 *In second voice*] By the voice of a deputy.

152–153 *whatever praises . . . praise*] For this denunciation of self-praise cf. I, iii, 241–242, *supra.*

AJAX. I do hate a proud man, as I hate the engendering of toads.

NEST. [*Aside*] Yet he loves himself: is't not strange?

*Re-enter* ULYSSES

ULYSS. Achilles will not to the field to-morrow.
AGAM. What's his excuse?
ULYSS. He doth rely on none,
But carries on the stream of his dispose,
Without observance or respect of any,
In will peculiar and in self-admission.
AGAM. Why will he not, upon our fair request,
Untent his person, and share the air with us?
ULYSS. Things small as nothing, for request's sake only
He makes important: possess'd he is with greatness,
And speaks not to himself but with a pride
That quarrels at self-breath: imagined worth
Holds in his blood such swoln and hot discourse
That 'twixt his mental and his active parts
Kingdom'd Achilles in commotion rages
And batters down himself: what should I say?

---

154–155 *the engendering*] the spawn.

159 *dispose*] disposition.

161 *In will peculiar . . . self-admission*] At his personal choice and arbitrary self-assertion.

167 *quarrels at self-breath*] quarrels with himself, with his own utterances.

168 *Holds . . . discourse*] Rouses in his blood such heated controversy.

169–171 *'twixt . . . batters down himself*] Cf. *Jul. Cæs.*, II, i, 67–69: "the state of *man, Like to a little kingdom,* suffers then The nature

He is so plaguy proud that the death-tokens of it
Cry "No recovery."
  AGAM. Let Ajax go to him.
Dear lord, go you and greet him in his tent:
'T is said he holds you well, and will be led
At your request a little from himself.
  ULYSS. O Agamemnon, let it not be so!
We 'll consecrate the steps that Ajax makes
When they go from Achilles. Shall the proud lord
That bastes his arrogance with his own seam,
And never suffers matter of the world
Enter his thoughts, save such as do revolve
And ruminate himself, shall he be worshipp'd
Of that we hold an idol more than he?
No, this thrice worthy and right valiant lord
Must not so stale his palm, nobly acquired,
Nor, by my will, assubjugate his merit,
As amply titled as Achilles is,
By going to Achilles:
That were to enlard his fat-already pride,
And add more coals to Cancer when he burns

---

of an insurrection." "Kingdom'd" means after the manner of a kingdom (rent by civil strife).

172 *death-tokens*] small dark spots, which were reckoned fatal symptoms in sufferers from the plague. Cf. *Ant. and Cleop.*, III, x, 9–10: "like the *token'd pestilence* Where death is sure."

180 *seam*] lard, fat. Cf. line 190, *infra:* "to *enlard* his *fat*-already pride."

182–183 *revolve And ruminate himself*] revolve about and ruminate upon himself.

184 *Of that we hold*] By the man whom we hold.

186 *stale*] cheapen.

190 *enlard . . . pride*] Cf. line 180, *supra*.

With entertaining great Hyperion.
This lord go to him! Jupiter forbid,
And say in thunder "Achilles go to him."
NEST. [*Aside*] O, this is well; he rubs the vein of him.
DIO. [*Aside*] And how his silence drinks up this applause!
AJAX. If I go to him, with my armed fist
I'll pash him o'er the face.
AGAM. O, no, you shall not go.
AJAX. An a' be proud with me, I'll pheeze his pride:
Let me go to him.
ULYSS. Not for the worth that hangs upon our quarrel.
AJAX. A paltry, insolent fellow!
NEST. [*Aside*] How he describes himself!
AJAX. Can he not be sociable?
ULYSS. [*Aside*] The raven chides blackness.
AJAX. I'll let his humours blood.
AGAM. [*Aside*] He will be the physician that should be the patient.
AJAX. An all men were o' my mind, —

---

192 *Hyperion*] the sun; cf. *Hamlet*, I, ii, 140, and *Hen. V*, IV, i, 271.

198 *pash*] strike. Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *push*. Cf. "pashed" *infra*, V, v, 10.

200 *pheeze*] whip, tease with a whip. Cf. *T. of Shrew, Induction*, I, i: "I'll *pheeze* you, i' faith."

202 *Not for . . . quarrel*] Not for the value of all that we are fighting for.

206 *The raven chides blackness*] A variant of the proverb, The kettle calls the pot black.

207 *let his humours blood*] cure by bleeding his morbid temper. A popular collection of epigrams by Samuel Rowlands, which went through four editions between 1600 and 1611 was called *The Letting of Humours Blood in the head-vaine.*

ULYSS. [*Aside*] Wit would be out of fashion.

AJAX. A' should not bear it so, a' should eat swords first: shall pride carry it?

NEST. [*Aside*] An 't would, you 'ld carry half.

ULYSS. [*Aside*] A' would have ten shares.

AJAX. I will knead him, I'll make him supple.

NEST. [*Aside*] He 's not yet through warm: force him with praises: pour in, pour in; his ambition is dry.

ULYSS. [*To Agamemnon*] My lord, you feed too much
on this dislike.

NEST. Our noble general, do not do so.

DIO. You must prepare to fight without Achilles.

ULYSS. Why, 't is this naming of him does him harm.
Here is a man — but 't is before his face;
I will be silent.

NEST. Wherefore should you so?
He is not emulous, as Achilles is.

ULYSS. Know the whole world, he is as valiant.

AJAX. A whoreson dog, that shall palter thus with us! Would he were a Trojan!

NEST. What a vice were it in Ajax now —

ULYSS. If he were proud, —

DIO. Or covetous of praise, —

ULYSS. Ay, or surly borne, —

DIO. Or strange, or self-affected!

---

214 *ten shares*] ten times the amount.

217 *through warm*] thoroughly warm, warm all through.
*force*] cram; like the French "farcir."

227 *palter*] equivocate, prevaricate. Cf. V, ii, 48, *infra*.

232 *surly borne*] disposed to surliness.

233 *Or strange, or self-affected*] Or distant or self-conceited.

ULYSS. Thank the heavens, lord, thou art of sweet
composure;
Praise him that got thee, she that gave thee suck:
Famed be thy tutor, and thy parts of nature
Thrice-famed beyond, beyond all erudition:
But he that disciplined thine arms to fight,
Let Mars divide eternity in twain,
And give him half: and, for thy vigour,
Bull-bearing Milo his addition yield
To sinewy Ajax. I will not praise thy wisdom,
Which, like a bourn, a pale, a shore, confines
Thy spacious and dilated parts: here 's Nestor,
Instructed by the antiquary times,
He must, he is, he cannot but be wise;
But pardon, father Nestor, were your days
As green as Ajax', and your brain so temper'd,
You should not have the eminence of him,
But be as Ajax.
AJAX. Shall I call you father?
NEST. Ay, my good son.
DIO. Be ruled by him, Lord Ajax.
ULYSS. There is no tarrying here; the hart Achilles
Keeps thicket. Please it our great general
To call together all his state of war:
Fresh kings are come to Troy: to-morrow
We must with all our main of power stand fast:

---

241 *Milo*] A type of athletic strength in classical mythology. Cf. Ovid's *Metam.*, XV, 229, *seq.*
*his addition*] his title, reputation.
243 *bourn*] boundary.

And here 's a lord, come knights from east to west,
And cull their flower, Ajax shall cope the best.
AGAM. Go we to council. Let Achilles sleep:
Light boats sail swift, though greater hulks draw deep. [*Exeunt.*

## ACT THIRD — SCENE I — TROY

### *A ROOM IN PRIAM'S PALACE*

*Enter* PANDARUS *and a* Servant

PANDARUS

FRIEND, YOU, PRAY YOU, a word: do you not follow the young Lord Paris?

SERV. Ay, sir, when he goes before me.

PAN. You depend upon him, I mean?

SERV. Sir, I do depend upon the Lord.

PAN. You depend upon a noble gentleman; I must needs praise him.

SERV. The Lord be praised!

PAN. You know me, do you not?

SERV. Faith, sir, superficially.

PAN. Friend, know me better; I am the Lord Pandarus.

Serv. I hope I shall know your honour better.

Pan. I do desire it.

Serv. You are in the state of grace.

Pan. Grace! not so, friend; honour and lordship are my titles. [*Music within*] What music is this?

Serv. I do but partly know, sir: it is music in parts.

Pan. Know you the musicians?

Serv. Wholly, sir.

Pan. Who play they to?

Serv. To the hearers, sir.

Pan. At whose pleasure, friend?

Serv. At mine, sir, and theirs that love music.

Pan. Command, I mean, friend.

Serv. Who shall I command, sir?

Pan. Friend, we understand not one another: I am too courtly, and thou art too cunning. At whose request do these men play?

Serv. That 's to 't, indeed, sir: marry, sir, at the request of Paris my lord, who is there in person; with him, the mortal Venus, the heart-blood of beauty, love's invisible soul.

Pan. Who, my cousin Cressida?

---

12–16 *I hope I shall know . . . are my titles*] There is quibbling here. The servant first expresses a hope for Pandarus' spiritual betterment, and consolingly reflects that he is already in a state of grace, *i. e.*, in the way of salvation. Thereupon Pandarus deprecates any claim to be addressed by the clerical title of "Your grace."

17 *music in parts*] concerted music. Cf. line 47, *infra:* "broken music."

29 *to 't*] to the point.

31–32 *love's invisible soul*] the soul of (the goddess of) love, which mortal eye cannot see.

SERV. No, sir, Helen: could not you find out that by her attributes?

PAN. It should seem, fellow, that thou hast not seen the Lady Cressida. I come to speak with Paris from the Prince Troilus: I will make a complimental assault upon him, for my business seethes.

SERV. Sodden business! there's a stewed phrase indeed!

*Enter* PARIS *and* HELEN, *attended*

PAN. Fair be to you, my lord, and to all this fair company! fair desires, in all fair measure, fairly guide them! especially to you, fair queen! fair thoughts be your fair pillow!

HELEN. Dear lord, you are full of fair words.

PAN. You speak your fair pleasure, sweet queen. Fair prince, here is good broken music.

PAR. You have broke it, cousin: and, by my life, you shall make it whole again; you shall piece it out with a piece of your performance. Nell, he is full of harmony.

PAN. Truly, lady, no.

HELEN. O, sir, —

PAN. Rude, in sooth; in good sooth, very rude.

PAR. Well said, my lord! well, you say so in fits.

---

39 *seethes*] is at boiling point, is urgent.

40 *Sodden business . . . phrase*] an indelicate quibble on modes of curing venereal disease by means of sweating.

47 *broken music*] "music in parts," arranged for various instruments. Cf. line 17, *supra*.

54 *in fits*] capriciously, with a quibble on "fit" in the sense of a "stave" of a song.

**Pan.** I have business to my lord, dear queen. My lord, will you vouchsafe me a word?

**Helen.** Nay, this shall not hedge us out: we 'll hear you sing, certainly.

**Pan.** Well, sweet queen, you are pleasant with me. But, marry, thus, my lord: my dear lord, and most esteemed friend, your brother Troilus —

**Helen.** My Lord Pandarus; honey-sweet lord, —

**Pan.** Go to, sweet queen, go to: — commends himself most affectionately to you —

**Helen.** You shall not bob us out of our melody: if you do, our melancholy upon your head!

**Pan.** Sweet queen, sweet queen; that's a sweet queen, i' faith.

**Helen.** And to make a sweet lady sad is a sour offence.

**Pan.** Nay, that shall not serve your turn; that shall it not, in truth, la. Nay, I care not for such words; no, no. And, my lord, he desires you, that if the king call for him at supper, you will make his excuse.

**Helen.** My Lord Pandarus, —

**Pan.** What says my sweet queen, my very very sweet queen?

**Par.** What exploit 's in hand? where sups he to-night?

**Helen.** Nay, but, my lord, —

**Pan.** What says my sweet queen? My cousin will

---

57 *hedge us out*] bar us out, keep us from your song.

65 *bob us*] dodge us, trick us. Cf. II, i, 67, *supra*, and note.

fall out with you. You must not know where he sups.

Par. I'll lay my life, with my disposer Cressida.

Pan. No, no, no such matter; you are wide: come, your disposer is sick.

Par. Well, I'll make excuse.

Pan. Ay, good my lord. Why should you say Cressida? no, your poor disposer's sick.

Par. I spy.

Pan. You spy! what do you spy? Come, give me an instrument. Now, sweet queen.

Helen. Why, this is kindly done.

Pan. My niece is horribly in love with a thing you have, sweet queen.

Helen. She shall have it, my lord, if it be not my lord Paris.

Pan. He! no, she'll none of him; they two are twain.

Helen. Falling in, after falling out, may make them three.

Pan. Come, come, I'll hear no more of this; I'll sing you a song now.

---

80 *You must not know . . . sups*] Hanmer rightly makes these words part of Pandarus' speech. The old editions give them to Helen.

81 *my disposer*] The expression has been explained as "she who has the disposal of me, she who can make me do anything." But "disposed" is often found (cf. *L. L. L.*, II, i, 249, V, ii, 466) in the sense of "disposed to more or less licentious merriment." Paris may be merely describing Cressida as she who makes merriment for him.

87 *I spy*] the cry of children playing "hide and seek."

95 *twain*] at variance, at enmity.

96–97 *Falling in . . . three*] Lovers' reconciliation may lead to the begetting of a child.

HELEN. Ay, ay, prithee now. By my troth, sweet lord, thou hast a fine forehead.

PAN. Ay, you may, you may.

HELEN. Let thy song be love: this love will undo us all. O Cupid, Cupid, Cupid!

PAN. Love! ay, that it shall, i' faith.

PAR. Ay, good now, love, love, nothing but love.

PAN. In good troth, it begins so. [*Sings.*

Love, love, nothing but love, still more!
For, O, love's bow
Shoots buck and doe:
The shaft confounds,
Not that it wounds,
But tickles still the sore.
These lovers cry Oh! oh! they die:
Yet that which seems the wound to kill,
Doth turn oh! oh! to ha! ha! he!
So dying love lives still:
Oh! oh! a while, but ha! ha! ha!
Oh! oh! groans out for ha! ha! ha!

Heigh-ho!

HELEN. In love, i' faith, to the very tip of the nose.

PAR. He eats nothing but doves, love, and that breeds hot blood, and hot blood begets hot thoughts, and hot thoughts beget hot deeds, and hot deeds is love.

---

101 *a fine forehead*] a sign of manly beauty, here implying the possession of rare accomplishments.

102 *Ay, you may, you may*] A colloquialism for "you are pleased to jest at me." Cf. *Cor.*, II, iii, 34: "*you may, you may.*"

111–113 *The shaft confounds . . . tickles*] The shaft annoys, not because it wounds, but because it tickles.

115 *the wound to kill*] the mortal wound.

PAN. Is this the generation of love? hot blood, hot thoughts and hot deeds? Why, they are vipers: is love a generation of vipers? Sweet lord, who's afield to-day?

PAR. Hector, Deiphobus, Helenus, Antenor, and all the gallantry of Troy: I would fain have armed to-day, but my Nell would not have it so. How chance my brother Troilus went not?

HELEN. He hangs the lip at something: you know all, Lord Pandarus.

PAN. Not I, honey-sweet queen. I long to hear how they sped to-day. You'll remember your brother's excuse?

PAR. To a hair.

PAN. Farewell, sweet queen.

HELEN. Commend me to your niece.

PAN. I will, sweet queen. [*Exit.*

[*A retreat sounded.*

PAR. They're come from field: let us to Priam's hall,
To greet the warriors. Sweet Helen, I must woo you
To help unarm our Hector: his stubborn buckles,
With these your white enchanting fingers touch'd,
Shall more obey than to the edge of steel
Or force of Greekish sinews; you shall do more
Than all the island kings, — disarm great Hector.

---

126 *they are vipers*] Cf. *Acts* xxviii, 3: "there came a *viper* out of the heat."

127 *a generation of vipers*] Cf. *Matthew* iii, 7: "O *generation of vipers.*"

132 *hangs the lip*] a sign of annoyance.

145 *more obey*] yield more easily.

147 *the island kings*] the kings from the islands of Greece.

**Helen.** 'T will make us proud to be his servant, Paris;
Yea, what he shall receive of us in duty
Gives us more palm in beauty than we have,
Yea, overshines ourself.
**Par.** Sweet, above thought I love thee. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II — AN ORCHARD TO PANDARUS' HOUSE

*Enter* Pandarus *and* Troilus' Boy, *meeting*

**Pan.** How now! where 's thy master? at my cousin Cressida's?

**Boy.** No, sir; he stays for you to conduct him thither.

**Pan.** O, here he comes.

*Enter* Troilus

How now, how now!

**Tro.** Sirrah, walk off. [*Exit Boy.*

**Pan.** Have you seen my cousin?

**Tro.** No, Pandarus: I stalk about her door,
Like a strange soul upon the Stygian banks
Staying for waftage. O, be thou my Charon,
And give me swift transportance to those fields
Where I may wallow in the lily-beds

---

150 *more palm*] more glory or triumph.

8–10 *I stalk . . . Charon*] Cf. *Rich. III*, I, iv, 44–6: "my soul, Who pass'd, methought, the melancholy flood, With that grim ferryman which poets write of."

Proposed for the deserver! O gentle Pandarus,
From Cupid's shoulder pluck his painted wings,
And fly with me to Cressid!
PAN. Walk here i' the orchard, I'll bring her straight.
[*Exit.*
TRO. I am giddy; expectation whirls me round.
The imaginary relish is so sweet
That it enchants my sense: what will it be,
When that the watery palates taste indeed
Love's thrice repured nectar? death, I fear me,
Swounding destruction, or some joy too fine,
Too subtle-potent, tuned too sharp in sweetness,
For the capacity of my ruder powers:
I fear it much, and I do fear besides
That I shall lose distinction in my joys,
As doth a battle, when they charge on heaps
The enemy flying.

*Re-enter* PANDARUS

PAN. She 's making her ready, she 'll come straight: you must be witty now. She does so blush, and fetches her wind so short, as if she were frayed with a sprite:

---

16 *the orchard*] the garden; a common usage.
20 *watery palates*] the palates which water for, or strongly crave, fulfilment of desire.
21 *thrice repured*] thrice refined. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *thrice reputed.*
22 *Swounding*] a common form of *swooning.*
26 *distinction in my joys*] discrimination of my joys.
27 *a battle . . . heaps*] men of a battalion when they charge *en masse.*
31 *frayed with a sprite*] frightened by a ghost.

I'll fetch her. It is the prettiest villain: she fetches her breath as short as a new-ta'en sparrow. [*Exit.*

TRO. Even such a passion doth embrace my bosom:
My heart beats thicker than a feverous pulse;
And all my powers do their bestowing lose,
Like vassalage at unawares encountering
The eye of majesty.

*Re-enter* PANDARUS *with* CRESSIDA

PAN. Come, come, what need you blush? shame's a baby. Here she is now: swear the oaths now to her that you have sworn to me. What, are you gone again? you must be watched ere you be made tame, must you? Come your ways, come your ways; an you draw backward, we'll put you i' the fills. Why do you not speak to her? Come, draw this curtain, and let 's see your picture. Alas the day, how loath you are to offend daylight! an 't were dark, you'ld close sooner. So, so; rub on, and kiss the mistress. How now! a kiss in

---

35 *thicker*] faster, more tempestuously.

36 *their bestowing*] their control, their use.

42 *watched . . . tame*] hawks were tamed by being watched, *i. e.*, kept from sleep. Cf. *Othello,* III, iii, 23: "I 'll *watch* him tame."

44 *i' the fills*] in the shafts.

48 *rub on . . . mistress*] terms in bowls. "Rub" means to come into contact with some obstacle. It is not infrequently a preliminary to "hitting the jack," an achievement colloquially termed "kissing the mistress."

48–49 *a kiss in fee-farm . . . sweet*] "Fee-farm" meant full ownership. Pandarus means that Troilus has full right to kiss; the land — the sweet environment — is his own, to build on as he pleases.

fee-farm! build there, carpenter; the air is sweet. Nay, you shall fight your hearts out ere I part you. The falcon as the tercel, for all the ducks i' the river: go to, go to.

Tro. You have bereft me of all words, lady.

Pan. Words pay no debts, give her deeds: but she'll bereave you o' the deeds too, if she call your activity in question. What, billing again? Here 's "In witness whereof the parties interchangeably" — Come in, come in: I 'll go get a fire. [*Exit.*

Cres. Will you walk in, my lord?

Tro. O Cressida, how often have I wished me thus!

Cres. Wished, my lord? — The gods grant — O my lord!

Tro. What should they grant? what makes this pretty abruption? What too curious dreg espies my sweet lady in the fountain of our love?

Cres. More dregs than water, if my fears have eyes.

Tro. Fears make devils of cherubins; they never see truly.

Cres. Blind fear, that seeing reason leads, finds safer footing than blind reason stumbling without fear: to fear the worst oft cures the worse.

---

51 *The falcon as the tercel*] Pandarus confidently wagers that the falcon, the male hawk, will prove a match for the tercel, the female hawk.

56 *billing*] a quibble. The word is used of birds joining bills as a mode of courtship; but here suggests signing bills or legal deeds.

57 "*In witness . . . interchangeably*"] The formal declaration usually concluding covenants, to which both parties put their seal.

63 *abruption*] abrupt break.

TRO. O, let my lady apprehend no fear: in all Cupid's pageant there is presented no monster.

CRES. Nor nothing monstrous neither?

TRO. Nothing, but our undertakings; when we vow to weep seas, live in fire, eat rocks, tame tigers; thinking it harder for our mistress to devise imposition enough than for us to undergo any difficulty imposed. This is the monstruosity in love, lady, that the will is infinite and the execution confined, that the desire is boundless and the act a slave to limit.

CRES. They say, all lovers swear more performance than they are able, and yet reserve an ability that they never perform, vowing more than the perfection of ten, and discharging less than the tenth part of one. They that have the voice of lions and the act of hares, are they not monsters?

TRO. Are there such? such are not we: praise us as we are tasted, allow us as we prove; our head shall go bare till merit crown it: no perfection in reversion shall have a praise in present: we will not name desert before his birth, and, being born, his addition shall be humble. Few words to fair faith: Troilus shall be such to Cressid as what envy can say worst shall be a mock for his truth, and what truth can speak truest, not truer than Troilus.

CRES. Will you walk in, my lord?

---

77 *undergo any difficulty*] undertake any difficult task.

88 *allow us as we prove*] approve or commend us as we stand the test.

91 *his addition . . . humble*] we will give it (*i. e.*, merit) no pompous titles.

93–94 *what envy . . . truth*] the worst that malice can do is to ridicule him for his constancy.

*Re-enter* Pandarus

Pan. What, blushing still? have you not done talking yet?

Cres. Well, uncle, what folly I commit, I dedicate to you.

Pan. I thank you for that: 'if my lord get a boy of you, you'll give him me. Be true to my lord: if he flinch, chide me for it.

Tro. You know now your hostages; your uncle's word and my firm faith.

Pan. Nay, I'll give my word for her too: our kindred, though they be long ere they are wooed, they are constant being won: they are burs, I can tell you; they'll stick where they are thrown.

Cres. Boldness comes to me now, and brings me
heart.
Prince Troilus, I have loved you night and day
For many weary months.

Tro. Why was my Cressid then so hard to win?

Cres. Hard to seem won: but I was won, my lord,
With the first glance that ever — pardon me;
If I confess much, you will play the tyrant.
I love you now; but not, till now, so much
But I might master it: in faith, I lie;
My thoughts were like unbridled children, grown
Too headstrong for their mother. See, we fools!
Why have I blabb'd? who shall be true to us,

---

108–109 *they are burs . . . thrown*] Cf. *Meas. for Meas.*, IV, iii, 173: am a kind of *burr*; I shall *stick*."

When we are so unsecret to ourselves?
But, though I loved you well, I woo'd you not;
And yet, good faith, I wish'd myself a man,
Or that we women had men's privilege
Of speaking first. Sweet, bid me hold my tongue;
For in this rapture I shall surely speak
The thing I shall repent. See, see, your silence,
Cunning in dumbness, from my weakness draws
My very soul of counsel! Stop my mouth.
  **Tro.** And shall, albeit sweet music issues thence.
  **Pan.** Pretty, i' faith.
  **Cres.** My lord, I do beseech you, pardon me;
'T was not my purpose thus to beg a kiss:
I am ashamed; O heavens! what have I done?
For this time will I take my leave, my lord.
  **Tro.** Your leave, sweet Cressid?
  **Pan.** Leave! an you take leave till to-morrow morning —
  **Cres.** Pray you, content you.
  **Tro.** What offends you, lady?
  **Cres.** Sir, mine own company.
  **Tro.** You cannot shun yourself.
  **Cres.** Let me go and try:
I have a kind of self resides with you,
But an unkind self that itself will leave
To be another's fool. I would be gone:
Where is my wit? I know not what I speak.

---

129 *Cunning*] Pope's correction of the old reading *Comming.*

130 *My very soul of counsel*] The very essence of my secret thought.

144 *I have . . . with you*] Cf. *Sonnet* cxxxiii, 13–14: "for I, being pent in thee, Perforce am thine, and all that is in me."

TRO. Well know they what they speak that speak so wisely.
CRES. Perchance, my lord, I show more craft than
love,
And fell so roundly to a large confession
To angle for your thoughts: but you are wise;
Or else you love not, for to be wise and love
Exceeds man's might; that dwells with gods above.
TRO. O that I thought it could be in a woman —
As, if it can, I will presume in you —
To feed for aye her lamp and flames of love;
To keep her constancy in plight and youth,
Outliving beauty's outward, with a mind
That doth renew swifter than blood decays!
Or that persuasion could but thus convince me,
That my integrity and truth to you
Might be affronted with the match and weight
Of such a winnowed purity in love;
How were I then uplifted! but, alas!
I am as true as truth's simplicity,
And simpler than the infancy of truth.
CRES. In that I'll war with you.

---

150 *roundly*] openly, without reserve.

151–153 *you are wise . . . gods above*] apparently a paraphrase of the Latin maxim, "Amare et sapere vix deo conceditur." ("To love and be wise is a capacity hardly allotted to a god.") "Or else" had the unusual force here of "And if it be so." For "Or else you love not," Cressida means "That is to say you are not in love."

157 *in plight*] in good condition.

162–163 *Might be affronted . . . purity in love*] Might be confronted or matched with an equal force of such sifted purity of love.

TRO. O virtuous fight,
When right with right wars who shall be most right!
True swains in love shall in the world to come
Approve their truths by Troilus: when their rhymes,
Full of protest, of oath and big compare,
Want similes, truth tired with iteration,
"As true as steel, as plantage to the moon,
As sun to day, as turtle to her mate,
As iron to adamant, as earth to the centre,"
Yet, after all comparisons of truth,
As truth's authentic author to be cited,
"As true as Troilus" shall crown up the verse
And sanctify the numbers.
CRES. Prophet may you be!
If I be false, or swerve a hair from truth,
When time is old and hath forgot itself,
When waterdrops have worn the stones of Troy,
And blind oblivion swallow'd cities up,
And mighty states characterless are grated
To dusty nothing, yet let memory,
From false to false, among false maids in love,

---

173 *as plantage to the moon*] as the vegetable world is dependent on the moon's influence. Plants were supposed to wax and wane with the waxing and waning of the moon.

175 *adamant*] the loadstone or magnet.

*as earth to the centre*] The earth filled the central place in the solar system, according to the old astronomy. Cf. I, iii, 85, *supra*, and note.

177–178 *As truth's . . . verse*] Troilus means that the proverb "As true as Troilus" shall complete or round off the poetic protestation, and shall be cited as the word of an author of irrefutable truth.

184 *characterless*] without leaving records or traces.

Upbraid my falsehood! when they've said "as false
As air, as water, wind, or sandy earth,
As fox to lamb, or wolf to heifer's calf,
Pard to the hind, or stepdame to her son,"
"Yea," let them say, to stick the heart of falsehood,
"As false as Cressid."

PAN. Go to, a bargain made: seal it, seal it; I'll be the witness. Here I hold your hand; here my cousin's. If ever you prove false one to another, since I have taken such pains to bring you together, let all pitiful goers-between be called to the world's end after my name; call them all Pandars; let all constant men be Troiluses, all false women Cressids, and all brokers-between Pandars! Say "amen."

TRO. Amen.

CRES. Amen.

PAN. Amen. Whereupon I will show you a chamber with a bed; which bed, because it shall not speak of your pretty encounters, press it to death: away!

[*Exeunt Tro. and Cres.*

And Cupid grant all tongue-tied maidens here
Bed, chamber, Pandar to provide this gear! [*Exit.*

190 *stepdame to her son*] A stepmother was traditionally reckoned a cruel tyrant.

191 *stick*] stab, kill.

205 *press it to death*] a jesting reference to the cruel punishment of pressing to death accused persons who refused to plead. Cf. *Much Ado*, III, i, 76, and note.

## SCENE III — THE GRECIAN CAMP

*Flourish. Enter* AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES, DIOMEDES, NESTOR, AJAX, MENELAUS, *and* CALCHAS

CAL. Now, princes, for the service I have done you,
The advantage of the time prompts me aloud
To call for recompense. Appear it to your mind
That, through the sight I bear in things to love,
I have abandon'd Troy, left my possession,
Incurr'd a traitor's name; exposed myself,
From certain and possess'd conveniences,
To doubtful fortunes; sequestering from me all
That time, acquaintance, custom and condition
Made tame and most familiar to my nature,
And here, to do you service, am become
As new into the world, strange, unacquainted:
I do beseech you, as in way of taste,
To give me now a little benefit,
Out of those many register'd in promise,
Which, you say, live to come in my behalf.

---

3 *Appear it*] Make it manifest.

4 *through the sight . . . love*] a most difficult passage which can only mean, as it stands, in conflict with the context: "through the insight I possess as to what things deserve love or regard." If the comma after *love* be transferred to follow *things*, the meaning might be that Calchas through his insight has abandoned Troy to the dominion of love, to the consequences of Helen's amours with Paris. The sentence with this punctuation is hardly made plainer by substituting (with Johnson) *Jove* for *love*. The Fourth Folio reads *things to come* (*i. e.*, futurity) for *things to love*. This is a reasonable simplification.

AGAM. What wouldst thou of us, Trojan? make demand.
CAL. You have a Trojan prisoner, call'd Antenor,
Yesterday took: Troy holds him very dear.
Oft have you — often have you thanks therefore —
Desired my Cressid in right great exchange,
Whom Troy hath still denied: but this Antenor,
I know, is such a wrest in their affairs,
That their negotiations all must slack,
Wanting his manage; and they will almost
Give us a prince of blood, a son of Priam,
In change of him: let him be sent, great princes,
And he shall buy my daughter; and her presence
Shall quite strike off all service I have done,
In most accepted pain.
AGAM. Let Diomedes bear him,
And bring us Cressid hither: Calchas shall have
What he requests of us. Good Diomed,
Furnish you fairly for this interchange:
Withal, bring word if Hector will to-morrow
Be answer'd in his challenge: Ajax is ready.
DIO. This shall I undertake; and 't is a burthen
Which I am proud to bear. [*Exeunt Diomedes and Calchas.*

---

21 *in right great exchange*] by exchanging her for a prisoner of real eminence in your hands.

23 *a wrest*] literally the tuning key of a lute; here, a wise moderating influence. Cf. I, iii, 157, *supra*, "o'er-*wrested*."

30 *In most accepted pain*] In labour which I have cheerfully undertaken; "accepted" means "acceptable."

*Enter* ACHILLES *and* PATROCLUS, *before their tent*

ULYSS. Achilles stands i' the entrance of his tent:
Please it our general pass strangely by him,
As if he were forgot; and, princes all,
Lay negligent and loose regard upon him:
I will come last. 'T is like he 'll question me
Why such unplausive eyes are bent on him:
If so, I have derision medicinable,
To use between your strangeness and his pride,
Which his own will shall have desire to drink.
It may do good: pride hath no other glass
To show itself but pride, for supple knees
Feed arrogance and are the proud man's fees.
AGAM. We'll execute your purpose and put on
A form of strangeness as we pass along;
So do each lord, and either greet him not
Or else disdainfully, which shall shake him more
Than if not look'd on. I will lead the way.
ACHIL. What, comes the general to speak with me?
You know my mind; I'll fight no more 'gainst Troy.
AGAM. What says Achilles? would he aught with us?
NEST. Would you, my lord, aught with the general?
ACHIL. No.
NEST. Nothing, my lord.
AGAM. The better. [*Exeunt Agamemnon and Nestor.*

---

43 *Why such . . . on him*] The old editions add to the line the words *why turn'd on him*, obviously a gloss which has accidentally crept into the text; "unplausive" means "disapproving."

45 *strangeness*] distant attitude, bearing of aloofness.

ACHIL. Good day, good day.
MEN. How do you? how do you? [*Exit*
ACHIL. What, does the cuckold scorn me?
AJAX. How now, Patroclus!
ACHIL. Good morrow, Ajax.
AJAX. Ha?
ACHIL. Good morrow.
AJAX. Ay, and good next day too. [*Exit.*
ACHIL. What mean these fellows? Know they not Achilles?
PATR. They pass by strangely: they were used to bend,
To send their smiles before them to Achilles,
To come as humbly as they used to creep
To holy altars.
ACHIL. What, am I poor of late?
'T is certain, greatness, once fall'n out with fortune,
Must fall out with men too: what the declined is,
He shall as soon read in the eyes of others
As feel in his own fall: for men, like butterflies,
Show not their mealy wings but to the summer;
And not a man, for being simply man,
Hath any honour, but honour for those honours
That are without him, as place, riches, and favour,
Prizes of accident as oft as merit:
Which when they fall, as being slippery standers,
The love that lean'd on them as slippery too,

---

79 *mealy wings*] wings looking as if they were covered with meal-dust or flour. The butterfly is consequently called the "miller" in some provincial dialects.

Do one pluck down another and together
Die in the fall. But 't is not so with me:
Fortune and I are friends: I do enjoy
At ample point all that I did possess,
Save these men's looks; who do, methinks, find out
Something not worth in me such rich beholding
As they have often given. Here is Ulysses:
I'll interrupt his reading.
How now, Ulysses!
ULYSS. Now, great Thetis' son!
ACHIL. What are you reading?
ULYSS. A strange fellow here
Writes me: "That man, how dearly ever parted,
How much in having, or without or in,
Cannot make boast to have that which he hath,
Nor feels not what he owes, but by reflection;
As when his virtues shining upon others
Heat them, and they retort that heat again
To the first giver."
ACHIL. This is not strange, Ulysses.
The beauty that is borne here in the face
The bearer knows not, but commends itself
To others' eyes: nor doth the eye itself,
That most pure spirit of sense, behold itself,
Not going from itself; but eye to eye opposed

---

89 *At ample point*] In ample measure.

96–97 *how dearly . . . or without or in*] however richly endowed, however much he have of external bodily gifts or internal mental ones.

105–106 *To others' . . . behold itself*] These lines are found only in the Quartos. They are omitted from the Folios.

106 *spirit of sense*] used of the hand, *supra*, I, i, 57.

Salutes each other with each other’s form:
For speculation turns not to itself,
Till it hath travell’d and is mirror’d there
Where it may see itself. This is not strange at all.
  Ulyss. I do not strain at the position —
It is familiar — but at the author’s drift;
Who in his circumstance expreſsly proves
That no man is the lord of any thing,
Though in and of him there be much consisting,
Till he communicate his parts to others;
Nor doth he of himself know them for aught,
Till he behold them formed in the applause
Where they ’re extended; who, like an arch, reverberates
The voice again; or, like a gate of steel
Fronting the sun, receives and renders back
His figure and his heat. I was much rapt in this;
And apprehended here immediately
The unknown Ajax.
Heavens, what a man is there! a very horse;
That has he knows not what. Nature, what things there are,

---

109 *speculation*] power of vision.

110 *mirror’d*] Singer’s emendation of the old reading *married* (*i. e.* closely joined, gathered together), which is less satisfactory.

114 *his circumstance*] the detail of his argument.

120 *who*] The antecedent would seem to be “applause” of line 119· “who” is used for “which.”

125 *The unknown Ajax*] Ajax unknown, untried in competition with others.

125–133 *The unknown . . . to do*] The Folios arrange the lines here thus. The Quartos make line 127 (*Nature . . . are*) the short line of the passage.

Most abject in regard and dear in use!
What things again most dear in the esteem
And poor in worth! Now shall we see to-morrow —
An act that very chance doth throw upon him —
Ajax renown'd. O heavens, what some men do,
While some men leave to do!
How some men creep in skittish fortune's hall,
Whiles others play the idiots in her eyes!
How one man eats into another's pride,
While pride is fasting in his wantonness!
To see these Grecian lords! Why, even already
They clap the lubber Ajax on the shoulder,
As if his foot were on brave Hector's breast
And great Troy shrieking.
  ACHIL. I do believe it; for they pass'd by me
As misers do by beggars, neither gave to me
Good word nor look: what, are my deeds forgot?
  ULYSS. Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,

---

128 *Most abject . . . use*] Of most contemptible value, but excessively useful.

134–135 *some men creep . . . in her eyes*] Some are slow in attracting the protecting favours of fickle Fortune. Others, though perfect idiots, bask in the sunshine of her eyes.

137 *While pride . . . wantonness*] While pride is capriciously abstaining from the active exertion (which might lend it sustenance). For the Quarto reading *fasting*, the Folios awkwardly substitute *feasting*.

139 *clap . . . on the shoulder*] boisterously applaud.

141 *shrieking*] Thus the Quarto. The Folios read, less vividly, *shrinking*.

145–150 *Time hath . . . As done*] In Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, VI, viii, 23 and 24, the lady Mirabell is said to carry a wallet at her back, wherein she puts "repentaunce for things past and gon."

A great-sized monster of ingratitudes:
Those scraps are good deeds past, which are devour'd
As fast as they are made, forgot as soon
As done: perseverance, dear my lord,
Keeps honour bright: to have done, is to hang
Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail
In monumental mockery. Take the instant way;
For honour travels in a strait so narrow,
Where one but goes abreast: keep then the path;
For emulation hath a thousand sons
That one by one pursue: if you give way,
Or hedge aside from the direct forthright,
Like to an enter'd tide they all rush by
And leave you hindmost:
Or, like a gallant horse fall'n in first rank,
Lie there for pavement to the abject rear,
O'er-run and trampled on: then what they do in present,
Though less than yours in past, must o'ertop yours;
For time is like a fashionable host
That slightly shakes his parting guest by the hand,
And with his arms outstretch'd, as he would fly,
Grasps in the comer: welcome ever smiles,

---

150 *perseverance*] The accent is on the second syllable. Shakespeare uses the word only here and in *Macb.*, IV, iii, 93.

152 *mail*] coat of armour; Pope's spelling of the original reading *male*.

160 *hindmost*] Thus the Folios. The Quarto reads, unintelligibly, *him, most, then*.

161–163 *Or, like . . . trampled on*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos omit these words.

162 *the abject rear*] Hanmer's correction of the meaningless Folio reading *abject, neere* (or *near*).

And farewell goes out sighing. O, let not virtue seek
Remuneration for the thing it was;
For beauty, wit,
High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all
To envious and calumniating time.
One touch of nature makes the whole world kin;
That all with one consent praise new-born gawds,
Though they are made and moulded of things past,
And give to dust that is a little gilt
More laud than gilt o'er-dusted.
The present eye praises the present object:
Then marvel not, thou great and complete man,
That all the Greeks begin to worship Ajax;
Since things in motion sooner catch the eye
Than what not stirs. The cry went once on thee,
And still it might, and yet it may again,
If thou wouldst not entomb thyself alive
And case thy reputation in thy tent,
Whose glorious deeds, but in these field of late,
Made emulous missions 'mongst the gods themselves,
And drave great Mars to faction.

---

175 *One touch of nature . . . kin*] In this oft-quoted line "touch" is used in the ordinary sense of spark, or smack. Cf. IV, ii, 96, *infra:* "*touch* of consanguinity," and *Macb.*, IV, ii, 9: "He wants the natural *touch.*" It is unsatisfactory to interpret "touch" as "defect," *i. e.*, the defect of running after what is new.

176 *gawds*] toys, trifles.

179 *gilt o'er-dusted*] gold covered with dust (of antiquity).

189 *Made emulous missions . . . themselves*] Excited jealousies among the gods, which led to their intervention. "Missions," doubtless means

ACHIL. Of this my privacy
I have strong reasons.
ULYSS. But 'gainst your privacy
The reasons are more potent and heroical:
'T is known, Achilles, that you are in love
With one of Priam's daughters.
ACHIL. Ha! known?
ULYSS. Is that a wonder?
The providence that's in a watchful state
Knows almost every grain of Plutus' gold,
Finds bottom in the uncomprehensive deeps,
Keeps place with thought, and almost like the gods
Does thoughts unveil in their dumb cradles.
There is a mystery, with whom relation
Durst never meddle, in the soul of state;
Which hath an operation more divine
Than breath or pen can give expressure to:
All the commerce that you have had with Troy
As perfectly is ours as yours, my lord;

---

diplomatic negotiations or despatches. Some modern editors read *scissions* or *divisions*.

194 *one of Priam's daughters*] Polyxena (see line 208, *infra*), who was betrothed to Achilles. At the ceremony of the wedding Achilles was slain by the bride's brother Paris.

196 *providence*] foresight.

197 *every grain of Plutus' gold*] The Quartos have merely *everything*. The Folios read *every graine of Plutoes gold*. A similar confusion of Plutus and Pluto occurs in the Folio text of *Jul. Cæs.*, IV, iii, 102: "dearer than *Pluto's* (for *Plutus's*) mine."

198 *uncomprehensive*] incomprehensible, mysterious.

200 *cradles*] The word must be pronounced trisyllabically.

201 *relation*] narration, report.

And better would it fit Achilles much
To throw down Hector than Polyxena:
But it must grieve young Pyrrhus now at home,
When fame shall in our islands sound her trump;
And all the Greekish girls shall tripping sing
"Great Hector's sister did Achilles win,
But our great Ajax bravely beat down him."
Farewell, my lord: I as your lover speak;
The fool slides o'er the ice that you should break. [*Exit.*
 PATR. To this effect, Achilles, have I moved you:
A woman impudent and mannish grown
Is not more loathed than an effeminate man
In time of action. I stand condemn'd for this;
They think my little stomach to the war
And your great love to me restrains you thus:
Sweet, rouse yourself, and the weak wanton Cupid
Shall from your neck unloose his amorous fold,
And, like a dew-drop from the lion's mane,
Be shook to air.
 ACHIL. Shall Ajax fight with Hector?
 PATR. Ay, and perhaps receive much honour by him.
 ACHIL. I see my reputation is at stake;
My fame is shrewdly gored.
 PATR. O, then, beware;
Those wounds heal ill that men do give themselves:
Omission to do what is necessary

---

209 *Pyrrhus*] Achilles' son, by Deidameia, a princess of Scyros. After his father's death he was summoned to the Trojan war and took a prominent part in the final episode of the siege of Troy. See note on IV, v, 142, *infra.*

Seals a commission to a blank of danger;
And danger, like an ague, subtly taints
Even then when we sit idly in the sun.
ACHIL. Go call Thersites hither, sweet Patroclus:
I'll send the fool to Ajax, and desire him
To invite the Trojan lords after the combat
To see us here unarm'd: I have a woman's longing,
An appetite that I am sick withal,
To see great Hector in his weeds of peace;
To talk with him, and to behold his visage,
Even to my full of view. — A labour saved!

*Enter* THERSITES

THER. A wonder!

ACHIL. What?

THER. Ajax goes up and down the field, asking for himself.

ACHIL. How so?

THER. He must fight singly to-morrow with Hector, and is so prophetically proud of an heroical cudgelling that he raves in saying nothing.

ACHIL. How can that be?

THER. Why, a' stalks up and down like a peacock, — a stride and a stand: ruminates like an hostess that hath no arithmetic but her brain to set down her reckoning: bites his lip with a politic regard, as who should say

---

231 *Seals a commission . . . danger*] Gives danger a blank charter duly sealed. Danger may fill up the blank instrument with any demands it pleases to insert.

241 *to my full of view*] till my vision is completely satisfied.

254 *a politic regard*] a cunning look.

"There were wit in this head, an 't would out:" and so there is; but it lies as coldly in him as fire in a flint, which will not show without knocking. The man 's undone for ever; for if Hector break not his neck i' the combat, he 'll break 't himself in vain-glory. He knows not me: I said "Good morrow, Ajax;" and he replies "Thanks, Agamemnon." What think you of this man, that takes me for the general? He 's grown a very land-fish, languageless, a monster. A plague of opinion! a man may wear it on both sides, like a leather jerkin.

ACHIL. Thou must be my ambassador to him, Thersites.

THER. Who, I? why, he 'll answer nobody; he professes not answering: speaking is for beggars; he wears his tongue in 's arms. I will put on his presence: let Patroclus make demands to me, you shall see the pageant of Ajax.

ACHIL. To him, Patroclus: tell him I humbly desire the valiant Ajax to invite the most valorous Hector to come unarmed to my tent, and to procure safe-conduct for his person of the magnanimous and most illustrious six-or-seven-times-honoured captain-general of the Grecian army, Agamemnon, et cetera. Do this.

PATR. Jove bless great Ajax!

THER. Hum!

PATR. I come from the worthy Achilles, —

THER. Ha!

---

262–263 *He's grown . . . a monster*] Apparently a premonition of the conception of Caliban in *The Tempest.*

263 *A plague of opinion!*] A plague on self-conceit (which Thersites judges to be capable of anything).

PATR. Who most humbly desires you to invite Hector to his tent, —

THER. Hum!

PATR. And to procure safe-conduct from Agamemnon.

THER. Agamemnon?

PATR. Ay, my lord.

THER. Ha!

PATR. What say you to't?

THER. God be wi' you, with all my heart.

PATR. Your answer, sir.

THER. If to-morrow be a fair day, by eleven of the clock it will go one way or other: howsoever, he shall pay for me ere he has me.

PATR. Your answer, sir.

THER. Fare you well, with all my heart.

ACHIL. Why, but he is not in this tune, is he?

THER. No, but he's out o' tune thus. What music will be in him when Hector has knocked out his brains, I know not; but, I am sure, none, unless the fiddler Apollo get his sinews to make catlings on.

ACHIL. Come, thou shalt bear a letter to him straight.

THER. Let me bear another to his horse; for that's the more capable creature.

ACHIL. My mind is troubled like a fountain stirr'd,
And I myself see not the bottom of it.

[*Exeunt Achilles and Patroclus.*

THER. Would the fountain of your mind were clear again, that I might water an ass at it! I had rather be a tick in a sheep than such a valiant ignorance. [*Exit.*

---

299 *catlings*] strings of catgut for the lyre.

302 *capable*] intelligent.

# ACT FOURTH — SCENE I — TROY

## *A STREET*

*Enter, at one side,* ÆNEAS, *and* Servant *with a torch; at the other,* PARIS, DEIPHOBUS, ANTENOR, DIOMEDES, *and others, with torches*

PARIS

SEE, HO! WHO IS THAT there?
  DEI. It is the Lord Æneas.
  ÆNE. Is the prince there in person?
Had I so good occasion to lie long
As you, Prince Paris, nothing but heavenly business
Should rob my bed-mate of my company.
  DIO. That's my mind too. Good morrow, Lord Æneas.
  PAR. A valiant Greek, Æneas, — take his hand, —
Witness the process of your speech, wherein

---

9 *process*] tenour.

You told how Diomed a whole week by days
Did haunt you in the field.
ÆNE. Health to you, valiant sir,
During all question of the gentle truce;
But when I meet you arm'd, as black defiance
As heart can think or courage execute.
DIO. The one and other Diómed embraces.
Our bloods are now in calm; and, so long, health;
But when contention and occasion meet,
By Jove, I'll play the hunter for thy life
With all my force, pursuit and policy.
ÆNE. And thou shalt hunt a lion, that will fly
With his face backward. In humane gentleness,
Welcome to Troy! now, by Anchises' life,
Welcome, indeed! By Venus' hand I swear,
No man alive can love in such a sort
The thing he means to kill more excellently.
DIO. We sympathise. Jove, let Æneas live,
If to my sword his fate be not the glory,
A thousand complete courses of the sun!
But, in mine emulous honour, let him die,
With every joint a wound, and that to-morrow.
ÆNE. We know each other well.
DIO. We do; and long to know each other worse.
PAR. This is the most despiteful gentle greeting,

---

10 *a whole week by days*] day after day for a whole week.

13 *During all question . . . truce*] While friendly intercourse lasts in accordance with the terms of the truce.

23–24 *Anchises' . . . Venus'*] respectively the father and mother of Æneas.

The noblest hateful love, that e'er I heard of.
What business, lord, so early?
ÆNE. I was sent for to the king; but why, I know not.
PAR. His purpose meets you: 't was to bring this Greek
To Calchas' house; and there to render him,
For the enfreed Antenor, the fair Cressid:
Let's have your company, or, if you please,
Haste there before us. I constantly do think,
Or rather, call my thought a certain knowledge,
My brother Troilus lodges there to-night:
Rouse him and give him note of our approach,
With the whole quality wherefore: I fear
We shall be much unwelcome.
ÆNE. That I assure you:
Troilus had rather Troy were borne to Greece
Than Cressid borne from Troy.
PAR. There is no help;
The bitter disposition of the time
Will have it so. On, lord; we 'll follow you.
ÆNE. Good morrow, all. [*Exit with Servant.*
PAR. And tell me, noble Diomed, faith, tell me true,
Even in the soul of sound good-fellowship,
Who, in your thoughts, deserves fair Helen best,
Myself or Menelaus?

---

35 *hateful*] full of hate.
38 *His purpose meets you*] I as his messenger bring you his meaning.
42 *I constantly do think*] I am firmly convinced.
50 *bitter disposition*] desperate circumstances.

**Dio.** Both alike:
He merits well to have her that doth seek her,
Not making any scruple of her soilure,
With such a hell of pain and world of charge;
And you as well to keep her, that defend her,
Not palating the taste of her dishonour,
With such a costly loss of wealth and friends:
He, like a puling cuckold, would drink up
The lees and dregs of a flat tamed piece;
You, like a lecher, out of whorish loins
Are pleased to breed out your inheritors:
Both merits poised, each weighs nor less nor more,
But he as he, the heavier for a whore.
**Par.** You are too bitter to your countrywoman.
**Dio.** She 's bitter to her country: hear me, Paris:
For every false drop in her bawdy veins
A Grecian's life hath sunk; for every scruple
Of her contaminated carrion weight,
A Trojan hath been slain: since she could speak,
She hath not given so many good words breath
As for her Greeks and Trojans suffer'd death.
**Par.** Fair Diomed, you do as chapmen do,
Dispraise the thing that you desire to buy:

---

64 *a flat tamed piece*] a creature resembling wine from which the spirit or goodness has fled. "Piece" is used both for a cask of wine and for a woman of no account, a hussy.

67-68 *Both merits . . . for a whore*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *which heavier* for *the heavier*. Johnson substituted *each* for *which*. The meaning is that the merits of each, weighed one against the other, are equal. Each of the scales in which their merits are weighed is discounted by the burden of a harlot.

But we in silence hold this virtue well,
We 'll not commend what we intend to sell.
Here lies our way. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II — COURT OF PANDARUS' HOUSE

*Enter* TROILUS *and* CRESSIDA

TRO. Dear, trouble not yourself: the morn is cold.
CRES. Then, sweet my lord, I 'll call mine uncle down;
He shall unbolt the gates.
TRO. Trouble him not;
To bed, to bed: sleep kill those pretty eyes,
And give as soft attachment to thy senses
As infants' empty of all thought!
CRES. Good morrow, then.
TRO. I prithee now, to bed.
CRES. Are you a-weary of me?
TRO. O Cressida! but that the busy day,
Waked by the lark, hath roused the ribald crows,
And dreaming night will hide our joys no longer,
I would not from thee.
CRES. Night hath been too brief.

---

80 *We 'll not commend . . . sell*] Thus the old editions. Paris deprecates Diomede's vulgar depreciations of Helen with the assurance that the Trojans will not puff their wares like petty traders. Their value speaks for itself. Helen is not to be bartered in the petty ways of trade.

5–6 *give as soft attachment to . . . As infants'*] as gently arrest or seize upon thy senses as those of infants. "Attach" and "attachment" commonly had the significance of "arrest."

TRO. Beshrew the witch! with venomous wights she stays
As tediously as hell, but flies the grasps of love
With wings more momentary-swift than thought.
You will catch cold, and curse me.
CRES. Prithee, tarry:
You men will never tarry.
O foolish Cressid! I might have still held off,
And then you would have tarried. Hark! there's one up.
PAN. [*Within*] What, 's all the doors open here?
TRO. It is your uncle.
CRES. A pestilence on him! now will he be mocking:
I shall have such a life!

*Enter* PANDARUS

PAN. How now, how now! how go maidenheads?
Here, you maid! where 's my cousin Cressid?

CRES. Go hang yourself, you naughty mocking uncle! You bring me to do — and then you flout me too.

PAN. To do what? to do what? let her say what: what have I brought you to do?

CRES. Come, come, beshrew your heart! you'll ne'er be good, nor suffer others.

PAN. Ha, ha! Alas, poor wretch! a poor capocchia!

---

12 *venomous wights*] miserable wretches, who harbour venomous or malignant thoughts.

31 *capocchia*] Theobald's correction of the old reading *chipochia*. "Capocchio" is, according to Florio (*Ital-Engl. Dict.*, 1598), a common

hast not slept to-night? would he not, a naughty man, let it sleep? a bugbear take him!

CRES. Did not I tell you? would he were knock'd i' the head! *[One knocks.*
Who's that at door? good uncle, go and see.
My lord, come you again into my chamber.
You smile and mock me, as if I meant naughtily.

TRO. Ha, ha!

CRES. Come, you are deceived, I think of no such thing. *[Knocking.*
How earnestly they knock! Pray you, come in:
I would not for half Troy have you seen here.
*[Exeunt Troilus and Cressida.*

PAN. Who 's there? what 's the matter? will you beat down the door? How now! what's the matter?

*Enter* ÆNEAS

ÆNE. Good morrow, lord, good morrow.

PAN. Who's there? my Lord Æneas! By my troth, I knew you not: what news with you so early?

ÆNE. Is not prince Troilus here?

PAN. Here! what should he do here?

ÆNE. Come, he is here, my lord; do not deny him:
It doth import him much to speak with me.

PAN. Is he here, say you? 't is more than I know, I'll be sworn: for my own part, I came in late. What should he do here?

ÆNE. Who! nay, then: come, come, you'll do him

---

Italian word for a simpleton ("a shallow skonce, a loggerhead"), but "Capocchia," which has a physiological meaning, is probably right.

wrong ere you are ware: you'll be so true to him, to be false to him: do not you know of him, but yet go fetch him hither; go.

*Re-enter* TROILUS

TRO. How now! what 's the matter?
ÆNE. My lord, I scarce have leisure to salute you,
My matter is so rash: there is at hand
Paris your brother and Deiphobus,
The Grecian Diomed, and our Antenor
Deliver'd to us; and for him forthwith,
Ere the first sacrifice, within this hour,
We must give up to Diomedes' hand
The Lady Cressida.
TRO. Is it so concluded?
ÆNE. By Priam and the general state of Troy.
They are at hand and ready to effect it.
TRO. How my achievements mock me!
I will go meet them: and, my Lord Æneas,
We met by chance; you did not find me here.
ÆNE. Good, good, my lord; the secrets of nature
Have not more gift in taciturnity.
[*Exeunt Troilus and Æneas.*

---

55–56 *you 'll be so true . . . know of him*] in thinking to serve his interest, you are likely to do him harm; do not implicate yourself by admitting knowledge that he is here.

60 *rash*] urgent.

67 *the general state*] the general council.

71 *We met by chance . . . here*] Troilus bids Æneas conceal the facts.

72 *the secrets of nature*] the silent forces of nature. Thus the Folios. The Quartos read unsatisfactorily *the secrets of neighbor Pandar.* "Secrets" is pronounced trisyllabically.

Pan. Is 't possible? no sooner got but lost? The devil take Antenor! the young prince will go mad: a plague upon Antenor! I would they had broke 's neck!

*Re-enter* Cressida

Cres. How now! what 's the matter? who was here?

Pan. Ah, ah!

Cres. Why sigh you so profoundly? where's my lord? gone! Tell me, sweet uncle, what 's the matter?

Pan. Would I were as deep under the earth as I am above!

Cres. O the gods! What 's the matter?

Pan. Prithee, get thee in: would thou hadst ne'er been born! I knew thou wouldst be his death: O, poor gentleman! A plague upon Antenor!

Cres. Good uncle, I beseech you, on my knees I beseech you, what 's the matter?

Pan. Thou must be gone, wench, thou must be gone; thou art changed for Antenor: thou must to thy father, and be gone from Troilus: 't will be his death; 't will be his bane; he cannot bear it.

Cres. O you immortal gods! I will not go.

Pan. Thou must.

Cres. I will not, uncle: I have forgot my father;
I know no touch of consanguinity;
No kin, no love, no blood, no soul so near me
As the sweet Troilus. O you gods divine!
Make Cressid's name the very crown of falsehood,
If ever she leave Troilus! Time, force, and death,

---

96 *touch*] smack. Cf. III, iii, 175, *supra*, and note.
99 *crown*] culminating point.

Do to this body what extremes you can;
But the strong base and building of my love
Is as the very centre of the earth,
Drawing all things to it. I'll go in and weep, —
PAN. Do, do.
CRES. Tear my bright hair and scratch my praised cheeks,
Crack my clear voice with sobs, and break my heart
With sounding Troilus. I will not go from Troy. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE III — BEFORE PANDARUS' HOUSE

*Enter* PARIS, TROILUS, ÆNEAS, DEIPHOBUS, ANTENOR, *and* DIOMEDES

PAR. It is great morning, and the hour prefix'd
For her delivery to this valiant Greek
Comes fast upon: good my brother Troilus,
Tell you the lady what she is to do,
And haste her to the purpose.
TRO. Walk into her house;
I'll bring her to the Grecian presently:
And to his hand when I deliver her,
Think it an altar, and thy brother Troilus
A priest, there offering to it his own heart. [*Exit.*
PAR. I know what 't is to love;
And would, as I shall pity, I could help!
Please you walk in, my lords. [*Exeunt.*

---

103–104 *the very centre . . . to it*] The theory of the earth's gravitation, though ultimately established by Newton, was current in the popular natural philosophy of Shakespeare's day.

1 *great morning*] broad daylight. Cf. *Cymb.*, IV, ii, 62.

## SCENE IV—A ROOM IN PANDARUS' HOUSE

*Enter* PANDARUS *and* CRESSIDA

PAN. Be moderate, be moderate.

CRES. Why tell you me of moderation?
The grief is fine, full, perfect, that I taste,
And violenteth in a sense as strong
As that which causeth it: how can I moderate it?
If I could temporise with my affection,
Or brew it to a weak and colder palate,
The like allayment could I give my grief:
My love admits no qualifying dross;
No more my grief, in such a precious loss.

*Enter* TROILUS

PAN. Here, here, here he comes. Ah, sweet ducks!

CRES. O Troilus! Troilus! [*Embracing him.*

PAN. What a pair of spectacles is here! Let me embrace too. "O heart," as the goodly saying is,

"O heart, heavy heart,
Why sigh'st thou without breaking?"

where he answers again,

"Because thou canst not ease thy smart
By friendship nor by speaking."

---

4–5 *violenteth . . . causeth it*] rages with all the strength of the love that causes it. Thus the Quartos. The Folios confusedly substitute *no less* for *violenteth.*

14–19 *"O heart," as the goodly saying is . . . by speaking*] clearly an old song; but its source has not been traced.

19 *By friendship nor by speaking*] neither by Platonic affection nor by mere words.

There was never a truer rhyme. Let us cast away nothing, for we may live to have need of such a verse: we see it, we see it. How now, lambs!

Tro. Cressid, I love thee in so strain'd a purity,
That the blest gods, as angry with my fancy,
More bright in zeal than the devotion which
Cold lips blow to their deities, take thee from me.

Cres. Have the gods envy?

Pan. Ay, ay, ay, ay; 't is too plain a case.

Cres. And it is true that I must go from Troy?

Tro. A hateful truth.

Cres. What, and from Troilus too?

Tro. From Troy and Troilus.

Cres. Is it possible?

Tro. And suddenly; where injury of chance
Puts back leave-taking, justles roughly by
All time of pause, rudely beguiles our lips
Of all rejoindure, forcibly prevents
Our lock'd embrasures, strangles our dear vows
Even in the birth of our own labouring breath:
We two, that with so many thousand sighs
Did buy each other, must poorly sell ourselves
With the rude brevity and discharge of one.
Injurious time now with a robber's haste
Crams his rich thievery up, he knows not how:
As many farewells as be stars in heaven,

---

23 *strain'd*] refined, purified. Cf. IV, v, 169, *infra*. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *strange*.

24 *fancy*] love, passion.

35 *all rejoindure*] all meeting again.

36 *embrasures*] embraces.

With distinct breath and consign'd kisses to them,
He fumbles up into a loose adieu,
And scants us with a single famish'd kiss,
Distasted with the salt of broken tears.
  ÆNE. [*Within*] My lord, is the lady ready?
  TRO. Hark! you are call'd: some say the Genius so
Cries "Come!" to him that instantly must die.
Bid them have patience; she shall come anon.
  PAN. Where are my tears? rain, to lay this wind, or
my heart will be blown up by the root. [*Exit.*
  CRES. I must then to the Grecians?
  TRO. No remedy.
  CRES. A woeful Cressid 'mongst the merry Greeks!
When shall we see again?
  TRO. Hear me, my love: be thou but true of heart.
  CRES. I true! how now! what wicked deem is this?
  TRO. Nay, we must use expostulation kindly,
For it is parting from us:
I speak not "be thou true," as fearing thee;
For I will throw my glove to Death himself,
That there's no maculation in thy heart:

---

44 *and consign'd kisses to them*] and in addition to them kisses that are seals of fidelity.

47 *Distasted . . . tears*] Made bitter to the taste by the salt of tears and sobs. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *Distasting* for *Distasted*.

49–50 *the Genius*] the demon or spirit which is supposed to attend every human being through life. Cf. *Macb.*, III, i, 55: "My *Genius* is rebuked."

55 *the merry Greeks*] For the epithet cf. I, ii, 104, *supra*.

58 *deem*] surmise, suspicion.

62 *throw my glove*] give challenge.

63 *maculation*] blemish.

But "be thou true" say I, to fashion in
My sequent protestation; be thou true,
And I will see thee.
CRES. O, you shall be exposed, my lord, to dangers
As infinite as imminent: but I'll be true.
TRO. And I'll grow friend with danger. Wear this sleeve.
CRES. And you this glove. When shall I see you?
TRO. I will corrupt the Grecian sentinels,
To give thee nightly visitation.
But yet, be true.
CRES. O heavens! "Be true" again!
TRO. Hear why I speak it, love:
The Grecian youths are full of quality;
They're loving, well composed with gifts of nature,
And flowing o'er with arts and exercise:
How novelties may move and parts with person,
Alas, a kind of godly jealousy —
Which, I beseech you, call a virtuous sin —
Makes me afeard.
CRES. O heavens! you love me not.
TRO. Die I a villain then!

---

64–65 *to fashion in . . . protestation*] to harmonise or cohere with the protestation which follows.

69 *Wear this sleeve*] A lady's sleeve is very commonly mentioned as a token of a lady's favour worn by her lover or knightly champion. A cuff or band attached to the sleeve is probably meant.

75 *full of quality*] of fine condition, highly accomplished.

76–77 *They're loving . . . exercise*] The Quartos omit line 76 (*They're loving . . . nature*) and read *swelling* for *flowing* in line 77, the Folios have *Flawing* (an obvious misprint) *and swelling.*

78 *parts with person*] accomplishments with attractive physique.

In this I do not call your faith in question,
So mainly as my merit: I cannot sing,
Nor heel the high lavolt, nor sweeten talk,
Nor play at subtle games; fair virtues all,
To which the Grecians are most prompt and pregnant:
But I can tell that in each grace of these
There lurks a still and dumb-discoursive devil
That tempts most cunningly: but be not tempted.
  CRES. Do you think I will?
  TRO. No:
But something may be done that we will not:
And sometimes we are devils to ourselves,
When we will tempt the frailty of our powers,
Presuming on their changeful potency.
  ÆNE. [*Within*] Nay, good my lord!
  TRO. Come, kiss; and let us part.
  PAR. [*Within*] Brother Troilus!
  TRO. Good brother, come you hither;
And bring Æneas and the Grecian with you.
  CRES. My lord, will you be true?
  TRO. Who, I? alas, it is my vice, my fault:
Whiles others fish with craft for great opinion,
I with great truth catch mere simplicity;

---

85 *the high lavolt*] a high springing dance. Cf. "lavolta" in *Hen. V*, III, v, 33.

87 *pregnant*] apt.

96 *Presuming . . . potency*] Presuming them to be potent against change.

102 *opinion*] renown.

103 *I . . . simplicity*] I by mere straightforward honesty am content with a name for simple fidelity.

Whilst some with cunning gild their copper crowns,
With truth and plainness I do wear mine bare.
Fear not my truth: the moral of my wit
Is "plain and true"; there 's all the reach of it.

*Enter* ÆNEAS, PARIS, ANTENOR, DEIPHOBUS, *and* DIOMEDES

Welcome, Sir Diomed! here is the lady
Which for Antenor we deliver you:
At the port, lord, I'll give her to thy hand;
And by the way possess thee what she is.
Entreat her fair; and, by my soul, fair Greek,
If e'er thou stand as mercy of my sword,
Name Cressid, and thy life shall be as safe
As Priam is in Ilion.
DIO. Fair Lady Cressid,
So please you, save the thanks this prince expects:
The lustre in your eye, heaven in your cheek,
Pleads your fair usage; and to Diomed
You shall be mistress, and command him wholly.
TRO. Grecian, thou dost not use me courteously,
To shame the zeal of my petition to thee
In praising her: I tell thee, lord of Greece,
She is as far high-soaring o'er thy praises

---

106 *moral*] meaning.

110 *the port*] the gate of Troy; cf. line 135, *infra.*

121 *zeal*] Theobald's correction of the old reading *seale.* Troilus complains that Diomed is discourteous in promising Cressida protection on account of her beauty, instead of acknowledging his own impassioned request to "entreat her fair" by reason of his love for her. Cf. line 125, *infra:* "I charge thee use her well, even for my charge" (*i. e.*, at my bidding).

As thou, unworthy to be call'd her servant.
I charge thee use her well, even for my charge;
For, by the dreadful Pluto, if thou dost not,
Though the great bulk Achilles be thy guard,
I'll cut thy throat.
  DIO. O, be not moved, Prince Troilus:
Let me be privileged by my place and message
To be a speaker free; when I am hence,
I'll answer to my lust: and know you, lord,
I'll nothing do on charge: to her own worth
She shall be prized; but that you say "Be't so,"
I'll speak it in my spirit and honour "No!"
  TRO. Come, to the port. I'll tell thee, Diomed,
This brave shall oft make thee to hide thy head.
Lady, give me your hand; and, as we walk,
To our own selves bend we our needful talk.
[*Exeunt Troilus, Cressida, and Diomedes.*
[*A trumpet sounds.*
  PAR. Hark! Hector's trumpet.
  ÆNE. How have we spent this morning!
The prince must think me tardy and remiss,
That swore to ride before him to the field.
  PAR. 'T is Troilus' fault: come, come, to field with him.

---

131 *I'll answer to my lust*] I'll follow my inclination, I'll do as I please. "Lust" was often used in the colourless sense of "liking," "wish."

132 *on charge*] at dictation.

132–133 *to her own worth . . . prized*] at her own worth she shall be valued.

135 *port*] gate, as at 110, *supra*.

136 *brave*] insolence of speech.

DEI. Let us make ready straight.
ÆNE. Yea, with a bridegroom's fresh alacrity,
Let us address to tend on Hector's heels:
The glory of our Troy doth this day lie
On his fair worth and single chivalry. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE V — THE GRECIAN CAMP

### *LISTS SET OUT*

*Enter* AJAX, *armed;* AGAMEMNON, ACHILLES, PATROCLUS, MENELAUS, ULYSSES, NESTOR, *and others*

AGAM. Here art thou in appointment fresh and fair,
Anticipating time with starting courage.
Give with thy trumpet a loud note to Troy,
Thou dreadful Ajax, that the appalled air
May pierce the head of the great combatant
And hale him hither.
AJAX. Thou, trumpet, there's my purse.
Now crack thy lungs, and split thy brazen pipe:
Blow, villain, till thy sphered bias cheek
Outswell the colic of puff'd Aquilon:

---

143–147 *Let us . . . chivalry*] Thus the Folios. The passage is omitted from the Quartos.

145 *address to tend*] prepare to attend.

1 *appointment*] equipment, preparation.

6 *trumpet*] trumpeter; a frequent usage.

8 *sphered bias cheek*] swollen out round, like the protuberance of a bowl on the side to which the leaden weight or bias is affixed. For "bias" cf. line 169, *infra:* "bias-drawing."

9 *Outswell . . . Aquilon*] Exceed in size the puffed cheek of the god of the north wind when convulsed by pain. The figure is taken from the

Come, stretch thy chest, and let thy eyes spout blood;
Thou blow'st for Hector. [*Trumpet sounds.*
ULYSS. No trumpet answers.
ACHIL. 'T is but early days.
AGAM. Is not yond Diomed, with Calchas' daughter?
ULYSS. 'T is he, I ken the manner of his gait;
He rises on the toe: that spirit of his
In aspiration lifts him from the earth.

*Enter* DIOMEDES, *with* CRESSIDA

AGAM. Is this the Lady Cressid?
DIO. Even she.
AGAM. Most dearly welcome to the Greeks, sweet lady.
NEST. Our general doth salute you with a kiss.
ULYSS. Yet is the kindness but particular;
'T were better she were kiss'd in general.
NEST. And very courtly counsel: I'll begin.
So much for Nestor.
ACHIL. I'll take that winter from your lips, fair lady:
Achilles bids you welcome.
MEN. I had good argument for kissing once.
PATR. But that's no argument for kissing now;
For thus popp'd Paris in his hardiment,
And parted thus you and your argument.

---

drawing of the wind-god, with puffed out cheeks in medieval paintings. Suffering from "colic" suggests "windy convulsions."

24 *that winter*] the aged Nestor.

26, 27, 29 *argument*] In the first two places the word means "reason," and in the third, "theme."

28 *hardiment*] hardihood.

29 *And parted . . . argument*] Thus the Quartos. The line is omitted from the Folios.

ULYSS. O deadly gall, and theme of all our scorns!
For which we lose our heads to gild his horns.
PATR. The first was Menelaus' kiss; this, mine:
Patroclus kisses you.
MEN. O, this is trim!
PATR. Paris and I kiss evermore for him.
MEN. I'll have my kiss, sir. Lady, by your leave.
CRES. In kissing, do you render or receive?
PATR. Both take and give.
CRES. I'll make my match to live,
The kiss you take is better than you give;
Therefore no kiss.
MEN. I'll give you boot, I'll give you three for one.
CRES. You're an odd man; give even, or give none.
MEN. An odd man, lady! every man is odd.
CRES. No, Paris is not; for, you know, 't is true,
That you are odd, and he is even with you.
MEN. You fillip me o' the head.
CRES. No, I'll be sworn.

---

31 *we lose our heads . . . horns*] we sacrifice our reasons in order to shame the husbands; "horns" allude to the signs of disgrace traditionally ascribed to dishonoured husbands.

32 *The first . . . kiss*] Patroclus gives his first kiss in behalf of Menelaus.

37 *I'll make my match to live*] I'll stake my life.

40 *boot*] a bonus, something thrown in.

42 *every man is odd*] every man is a single individual.

44–46 *You fillip me . . . horn*] On Menelaus' complaint that Cressida lightly hits him on the head, Ulysses remarks that her finger-nail cannot do much injury to the horns on his head, the marks of his matrimonial dishonour.

Ulyss. It were no match, your nail against his horn.
May I, sweet lady, beg a kiss of you?
Cres. You may.
Ulyss. I do desire it.
Cres. Why, beg then.
Ulyss. Why then, for Venus' sake, give me a kiss,
When Helen is a maid again, and his.
Cres. I am your debtor; claim it when 't is due.
Ulyss. Never 's my day, and then a kiss of you.
Dio. Lady, a word: I'll bring you to your father.
[*Exit with Cressida.*
Nest. A woman of quick sense.
Ulyss. Fie, fie upon her!
There 's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,
Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out
At every joint and motive of her body.
O, these encounterers, so glib of tongue,
That give accosting welcome ere it comes,
And wide unclasp the tables of their thoughts
To every ticklish reader! set them down
For sluttish spoils of opportunity,
And daughters of the game. [*Trumpet within.*

---

56 *motive*] organ of movement, limb.

57 *encounterers*] forward women, flirts.

59 *accosting*] soliciting. Cf. *Tw. Night*, I, iii, 52–53: "'*accost*' is front her, board her, woo her, assail her." "*Accosting*" is Theobald's correction of the original reading *a coasting welcome* which has been interpreted to mean "a sidelong invitation" or "a look inviting from a distance." Cf. *M. Wives*, I, iii, 50: "she gives *the leer of invitation.*"

60 *tables*] tablets.

62 *sluttish spoils of opportunity*] disreputable wenches, of whose chastity every opportunity makes prey.

ALL. The Trojans' trumpet.
AGAM. Yonder comes the troop.

*Flourish. Enter* HECTOR, *armed;* ÆNEAS, TROILUS, *and other* Trojans, *with* Attendants

ÆNE. Hail, all the state of Greece! what shall be done
To him that victory commands? or do you purpose
A victor shall be known? will you the knights
Shall to the edge of all extremity
Pursue each other, or shall they be divided
By any voice or order of the field?
Hector bade ask.
AGAM. Which way would Hector have it?
ÆNE. He cares not; he'll obey conditions.
ACHIL. 'T is done like Hector; but securely done,
A little proudly, and great deal misprizing
The knight opposed.
ÆNE. If not Achilles, sir,
What is your name?
ACHIL. If not Achilles, nothing.
ÆNE. Therefore Achilles: but, whate'er, know this:
In the extremity of great and little,
Valour and pride excel themselves in Hector;
The one almost as infinite as all,

---

65 *the state*] the assembly of great personages.

69 *divided*] separated.

73-75 ACHILLES. *'T is done . . . opposed*] This speech is transferred from Agamemnon, to whom it is assigned in the early editions.

73 *securely*] over-confidently.

74 *misprizing*] underestimating.

78-81 *In the extremity . . . blank as nothing*] Hector viewed in relation to the qualities of valour and pride is more commendable than

The other blank as nothing. Weigh him well,
And that which looks like pride is courtesy.
This Ajax is half made of Hector's blood:
In love whereof, half Hector stays at home;
Half heart, half hand, half Hector comes to seek
This blended knight, half Trojan and half Greek.
ACHIL. A maiden battle then? O, I perceive you.

*Re-enter* DIOMEDES

AGAM. Here is Sir Diomed. Go, gentle knight,
Stand by our Ajax: as you and Lord Æneas
Consent upon the order of their fight,
So be it; either to the uttermost,
Or else a breath: the combatants being kin
Half stints their strife before their strokes begin.
[*Ajax and Hector enter the lists.*
ULYSS. They are opposed already.
AGAM. What Trojan is that same that looks so heavy?
ULYSS. The youngest son of Priam, a true knight,
Not yet mature, yet matchless, firm of word,
Speaking in deeds and deedless in his tongue,
Not soon provoked nor being provoked soon calm'd;
His heart and hand both open and both free;
For what he has he gives, what thinks he shows;

---

any other man. For where valour is found in the greatest perfection, he has more of it, and where pride is scarcest, he has less of it.

83 *This Ajax is half . . . blood*] Cf. line 120, *infra*, and note.

87 *maiden*] innocent, bloodless.

91–92 *either . . breath*] whether it be a fight *à l'outrance*, or a mere recreative exercise.

93 *Half stints*] Half stops.

98 *deedless . . . tongue*] not boasting of his deeds.

Yet gives he not till judgement guide his bounty,
Nor dignifies an impair thought with breath;
Manly as Hector, but more dangerous;
For Hector in his blaze of wrath subscribes
To tender objects, but he in heat of action
Is more vindicative than jealous love:
They call him Troilus, and on him erect
A second hope, as fairly built as Hector.
Thus says Æneas; one that knows the youth
Even to his inches, and with private soul
Did in great Ilion thus translate him to me.
[*Alarum. Hector and Ajax fight.*
AGAM. They are in action.
NEST. Now, Ajax, hold thine own!
TRO. Hector, thou sleep'st;
Awake thee!
AGAM. His blows are well disposed: there, Ajax!
DIO. You must no more. [*Trumpets cease.*
ÆNE. Princes, enough, so please you.
AJAX. I am not warm yet; let us fight again.
DIO. As Hector pleases.

---

103 *impair*] Thus substantially, and probably rightly, all the early editions. The word is not found elsewhere in the sense required here *i. e.*, "unsuitable," "unfit," "unseemly." Johnson substituted *impure*. But Ulysses is insisting, not on Troilus' chastity, but on his sound judgment.

105–106 *subscribes To tender objects*] is responsive to the call of tenderness, or of things provoking pity.

107 *vindicative*] vindictive, revengeful.

111 *to his inches*] every inch of him.
*with private soul*] confidentially.

112 *translate him*] interpret his character.

HECT. Why, then will I no more:
Thou art, great lord, my father's sister's son,
A cousin-german to great Priam's seed;
The obligation of our blood forbids
A gory emulation 'twixt us twain:
Were thy commixtion Greek and Trojan so,
That thou couldst say "This hand is Grecian all,
And this is Trojan; the sinews of this leg
All Greek, and this all Troy; my mother's blood
Runs on the dexter cheek, and this sinister
Bounds in my father's;" by Jove multipotent,
Thou shouldst not bear from me a Greekish member
Wherein my sword had not impressure made
Of our rank feud: but the just gods gainsay
That any drop thou borrow'dst from thy mother,
My sacred aunt, should by my mortal sword
Be drained! Let me embrace thee, Ajax:
By him that thunders, thou hast lusty arms;
Hector would have them fall upon him thus:
Cousin, all honour to thee!
AJAX. I thank thee, Hector:
Thou art too gentle and too free a man:
I came to kill thee, cousin, and bear hence
A great addition earned in thy death.

---

120–121 *Thou art . . . seed*] Ajax was son of Hesione, Priam's sister and Hector's aunt, by a Greek father, Telamon of Salamis. Cf. II, ii, 77, and line 83, *supra*.

134 *My sacred aunt*] Greek authors often apply conventionally this epithet to uncles and aunts.

139 *free*] magnanimous, generous.

141 *addition*] title to fame.

HECT. Not Neoptolemus so mirable,
On whose bright crest Fame with her loud'st Oyes
Cries "This is he," could promise to himself
A thought of added honour torn from Hector.
ÆNE. There is expectance here from both the sides,
What further you will do.
HECT. We'll answer it;
The issue is embracement: Ajax, farewell.
AJAX. If I might in entreaties find success, —
As seld I have the chance — I would desire
My famous cousin to our Grecian tents.
DIO. 'T is Agamemnon's wish; and great Achilles
Doth long to see unarm'd the valiant Hector.
HECT. Æneas, call my brother Troilus to me:
And signify this loving interview
To the expecters of our Trojan part;
Desire them home. Give me thy hand, my cousin;
I will go eat with thee, and see your knights.
AJAX. Great Agamemnon comes to meet us here.
HECT. The worthiest of them tell me name by name;

---

142 *Not Neoptolemus so mirable*] Achilles is clearly meant; but Neoptolemus was the individual surname only of his son Pyrrhus, who has been already mentioned, III, iii, 209, *supra*. Shakespeare apparently thought that Neoptolemus was Achilles' family name. "Mirable" means admirable.

143 *Oyes*] Oyez: literally Old French ("give ear"). This is the cry with which heralds or ushers in courts of law command attention.

147–148 *We 'll answer . . . embracement*] We'll answer the expectation (*i. e.*, expectance, line 146) hereafter. The immediate issue is a friendly embrace.

156 *part*] side.

But for Achilles, my own searching eyes
Shall find him by his large and portly size.
AGAM. Worthy of arms! as welcome as to one
That would be rid of such an enemy;
But that 's no welcome: understand more clear,
What's past and what's to come is strew'd with husks
And formless ruin of oblivion;
But in this extant moment, faith and troth,
Strain'd purely from all hollow bias-drawing,
Bids thee, with most divine integrity,
From heart of very heart, great Hector, welcome.
HECT. I thank thee, most imperious Agamemnon.
AGAM. [*To Troilus*] My well-famed lord of Troy, no less to you.
MEN. Let me confirm my princely brother's greeting;
You brace of warlike brothers, welcome hither.
HECT. Who must we answer?
ÆNE. The noble Menelaus.
HECT. O, you, my lord! by Mars his gauntlet, thanks!

---

165–170 *But that 's . . . integrity*] Thus the Folios. These lines are omitted from the Quartos.

169 *Strain'd . . . bias-drawing*] Purified of all tendency to swerve deceitfully; "strain'd" is similarly used IV, iv, 23, *supra;* "bias-drawing" refers to the devious movement of the bowl weighted with a bias. Cf. line 8, *supra.*

171 *From heart of very heart*] From the depth of my heart, my heart of hearts. Cf. *Hamlet*, III, ii, 71: "In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart."

172 *imperious*] imperial, royal.

177 *Mars his gauntlet*] "His" is the old form of the genitive.

Mock not, that I affect the untraded oath;
Your quondam wife swears still by Venus' glove:
She 's well, but bade me not commend her to you.
  MEN. Name her not now, sir; she's a deadly theme.
  HECT. O, pardon; I offend.
  NEST. I have, thou gallant Trojan, seen thee oft,
Labouring for destiny, make cruel way
Through ranks of Greekish youth; and I have seen thee,
As hot as Perseus, spur thy Phrygian steed,
Despising many forfeits and subduements,
When thou hast hung thy advanced sword i' the air,
Not letting it decline on the declined,
That I have said to some my standers by
"Lo, Jupiter is yonder, dealing life!"
And I have seen thee pause and take thy breath,
When that a ring of Greeks have hemm'd thee in,
Like an Olympian wrestling: this have I seen;
But this thy countenance, still lock'd in steel,
I never saw till now. I knew thy grandsire,
And once fought with him: he was a soldier good;

---

178 *untraded*] unhackneyed.

184 *Labouring for destiny*] Working out the decrees of fate.

186 *Perseus*] Shakespeare seems only to know Perseus as a horseman. Cf. I, iii, 42, *supra*, and *Hen. V*, III, vii, 21–23.

187 *Despising . . . subduements*] Disdaining the prizes which his prowess has made forfeit, and the fruits of conquest.

188 *hung . . . i' the air*] raised aloft thy uplifted sword.

189 *decline on the declined*] descend on the fallen.

191 *dealing life*] dispensing life.

196 *thy grandsire*] Laomedon, father of Priam.

But, by great Mars the captain of us all,
Never like thee. Let an old man embrace thee;
And, worthy warrior, welcome to our tents.
Æne. 'Tis the old Nestor.
Hect. Let me embrace thee, good old chronicle,
That hast so long walk'd hand in hand with time:
Most reverend Nestor, I am glad to clasp thee.
Nest. I would my arms could match thee in contention,
As they contend with thee in courtesy.
Hect. I would they could.
Nest. Ha!
By this white beard, I'ld fight with thee to-morrow:
Well, welcome, welcome! — I have seen the time.
Ulyss. I wonder now how yonder city stands,
When we have here her base and pillar by us.
Hect. I know your favour, Lord Ulysses, well.
Ah, sir, there's many a Greek and Trojan dead,
Since first I saw yourself and Diomed
In Ilion, on your Greekish embassy.
Ulyss. Sir, I foretold you then what would ensue:
My prophecy is but half his journey yet;
For yonder walls, that pertly front your town,
Yond towers, whose wanton tops do buss the clouds,
Must kiss their own feet.
Hect. I must not believe you:
There they stand yet; and modestly I think,
The fall of every Phrygian stone will cost

---

220 *Yond towers . . . buss the clouds*] Cf. *Lucrece*, 1370, "cloud-kissing Ilion."

A drop of Grecian blood: the end crowns all,
And that old common arbitrator, Time,
Will one day end it.
ULYSS. So to him we leave it.
Most gentle and most valiant Hector, welcome:
After the general, I beseech you next
To feast with me and see me at my tent.
ACHIL. I shall forestall thee, Lord Ulysses, thou!
Now, Hector, I have fed mine eyes on thee;
I have with exact view perused thee, Hector,
And quoted joint by joint.
HECT. Is this Achilles?
ACHIL. I am Achilles.
HECT. Stand fair, I pray thee: let me look on thee.
ACHIL. Behold thy fill.
HECT. Nay, I have done already.
ACHIL. Thou art too brief: I will the second time,
As I would buy thee, view thee limb by limb.
HECT. O, like a book of sport thou'lt read me o'er;
But there's more in me than thou understand'st.
Why dost thou so oppress me with thine eye?
ACHIL. Tell me, you heavens, in which part of his body
Shall I destroy him? whether there, or there, or there?
That I may give the local wound a name,

---

224 *the end crowns all*] a rendering of the Latin proverb, "finis coronat opus." Cf. *All's Well*, IV, iv, 35: "the fine's the crown."

230 *thou*] The old reading, for which *though*, *now*, and *there* (*i. e.*, on that point) have all been suggested; "thou" implies somewhat pointless impatience on Achilles' part.

233 *quoted*] noted, observed.

And make distinct the very breach whereout
Hector's great spirit flew: answer me, heavens!
**Hect.** It would discredit the blest gods, proud man,
To answer such a question: stand again:
Think'st thou to catch my life so pleasantly,
As to prenominate in nice conjecture
Where thou wilt hit me dead?
**Achil.** I tell thee, yea.
**Hect.** Wert thou an oracle to tell me so,
I'ld not believe thee. Henceforth guard thee well;
For I'll not kill thee there, nor there, nor there;
But, by the forge that stithied Mars his helm,
I'll kill thee every where, yea, o'er and o'er.
You wisest Grecians, pardon me this brag;
His insolence draws folly from my lips;
But I'll endeavour deeds to match these words,
Or may I never —
**Ajax.** Do not chafe thee, cousin:
And you, Achilles, let these threats alone
Till accident or purpose bring you to 't:
You may have every day enough of Hector,
If you have stomach: the general state, I fear,
Can scarce entreat you to be odd with him.
**Hect.** I pray you, let us see you in the field:

---

250 *prenominate . . . conjecture*] define beforehand in precise calculation.

255 *stithied Mars his helm*] manufactured on the anvil, or stithy, Mars' helmet; "his" is the old form of the genitive. Cf. line 177, *supra.*

264 *stomach*] the inclination.

264–265 *the general state . . . odd with him*] I fear the whole state of Greece will scarcely prevail on you to be at odds or fight with him.

We have had pelting wars since you refused
The Grecians' cause.
ACHIL. Dost thou entreat me, Hector?
To-morrow do I meet thee, fell as death;
To-night all friends.
HECT. Thy hand upon that match.
AGAM. First, all you peers of Greece, go to my tent;
There in the full convive we: afterwards,
As Hector's leisure and your bounties shall
Concur together, severally entreat him.
Beat loud the tabourines, let the trumpets blow,
That this great soldier may his welcome know.
[*Exeunt all but Troilus and Ulysses.*
TRO. My Lord Ulysses, tell me, I beseech you,
In what place of the field doth Calchas keep?
ULYSS. At Menelaus' tent, most princely Troilus:
There Diomed doth feast with him to-night;
Who neither looks upon the heaven nor earth,
But gives all gaze and bent of amorous view
On the fair Cressid.
TRO. Shall I, sweet lord, be bound to you so much,
After we part from Agamemnon's tent,
To bring me thither?
ULYSS. You shall command me, sir.

---

267 *pelting wars*] petty, inconsiderable wars.

272 *in the full convive we*] we feast to repletion. Cf. V, i, 3, *infra*: "let us feast him *to the height*."

274 *entreat*] entertain.

275 *Beat loud the tabourines*] Beat loud the small drums. Thus the Folios. The Quartos read, less satisfactorily, *To taste your bounties*, these words following *entreat him* without any stop.

As gentle tell me, of what honour was
This Cressida in Troy? Had she no lover there
That wails her absence?
  TRO. O, sir, to such as boasting show their scars,
A mock is due. Will you walk on, my lord?
She was beloved, she loved; she is, and doth:
But still sweet love is food for fortune's tooth. [*Exeunt.*

---

287 *gentle*] courteously.

## ACT FIFTH—SCENE I—THE GRECIAN CAMP

### *BEFORE ACHILLES' TENT*

*Enter* ACHILLES *and* PATROCLUS

ACHILLES

I'LL HEAT HIS BLOOD with Greekish wine to-night,
Which with my scimitar I'll cool to-morrow.
Patroclus, let us feast him to the height.

PATR. Here comes Thersites.

*Enter* THERSITES

ACHIL. How now, thou core of envy!
Thou crusty batch of nature, what 's the news?

THER. Why, thou picture of what thou seemest, and idol of idiot-worshippers, here 's a letter for thee.

---

**4** ***core***] **kernel or heart: often used of an ulcer. Cf. II, i, 7, *supra:* "botchy *core.*"**

**5** ***batch***] **usually applied to the loaves of bread included in one baking. The word seems suggested here by the epithet "crusty," *i. e.*, ill-tempered. Thersites has already been called a "cobloaf," II, i, 36, *supra.***

**Achil.** From whence, fragment?

**Ther.** Why, thou full dish of fool, from Troy.

**Patr.** Who keeps the tent now?

**Ther.** The surgeon's box, or the patient's wound.

**Patr.** Well said, adversity! and what need these tricks?

**Ther.** Prithee, be silent, boy; I profit not by thy talk: thou art thought to be Achilles' male varlet.

**Patr.** Male varlet, you rogue! what's that?

**Ther.** Why, his masculine whore. Now, the rotten diseases of the south, the guts-griping, ruptures, catarrhs, loads o' gravel i' the back, lethargies, cold palsies, raw eyes, dirt-rotten livers, wheezing lungs, bladders full of imposthume, sciaticas, limekilns i' the palm, incurable bone-ache, and the rivelled fee-simple of the tetter, take and take again such preposterous discoveries!

---

8 *fragment*] bit of a man. Cf. *Cor.*, I, i, 220: "Go get you home, you *fragments!*"

11 *The surgeon's . . . wound*] a pun on the word "tent" (*i. e.*, the surgeon's probe) in line 10.

12 *adversity*] contrariness, perverse quibbler.

16–17 *the rotten diseases of the south*] The south wind was reckoned to blow from an unhealthy quarter. Cf. *Cor.*, I, iv, 30: "All the *contagion of the south* light on you."

18–21 *raw eyes . . . tetter*] This part of the loathsome catalogue is found only in the Quartos. It is represented in the Folios merely by the words *and the like.*

20 *imposthume . . . limekilns i' the palm*] abscess, . . . burning pains in the palms of the hand, due to gouty chalk-lumps.

21 *the rivelled fee-simple of the tetter*] the full ownership of a wrinkling scabby cutaneous disorder.

22 *preposterous discoveries*] the rank vices disclosed in the Greek camp.

PATR. Why, thou damnable box of envy, thou, what mean'st thou to curse thus?

THER. Do I curse thee?

PATR. Why, no, you ruinous butt; you whoreson indistinguishable cur, no.

THER. No! why art thou then exasperate, thou idle immaterial skein of sleave silk, thou green sarcenet flap for a sore eye, thou tassel of a prodigal's purse, thou? Ah, how the poor world is pestered with such waterflies, diminutives of nature!

PATR. Out, gall!

THER. Finch-egg!

ACHIL. My sweet Patroclus, I am thwarted quite
From my great purpose in to-morrow's battle.
Here is a letter from Queen Hecuba,
A token from her daughter, my fair love,
Both taxing me and gaging me to keep
An oath that I have sworn. I will not break it:
Fall Greeks; fail fame; honour or go or stay;
My major vow lies here, this I'll obey.
Come, come, Thersites, help to trim my tent:

---

26 *ruinous butt*] rotten winecask.

26–27 *indistinguishable cur*] cur of no breed.

29 *sleave silk*] soft, flossy, unwoven silk. All Thersites' expressions here presume extreme flexibility, a weak, compliant nature.

31 *waterflies*] busy triflers, like flies flitting idly over the surface of a stream. Cf. *Hamlet*, V, ii, 82–83: "Dost know this *water-fly?*"

32 *diminutives*] dwarfs.

34 *Finch-egg*] A finch's egg is said to be very gaudily coloured, though very small.

38 *my fair love*] Polyxena. Cf. III, iii, 208, *supra*.

39 *taxing*] accusing.

This night in banqueting must all be spent.
Away, Patroclus! [*Exeunt Achilles and Patroclus.*

THER. With too much blood and too little brain, these two may run mad; but, if with too much brain and too little blood they do, I'll be a curer of madmen. Here's Agamemnon, an honest fellow enough and one that loves quails; but he has not so much brain as ear-wax: and the goodly transformation of Jupiter there, his brother, the bull, the primitive statue and oblique memorial of cuckolds; a thrifty shoeing-horn in a chain, hanging at his brother's leg, — to what form but that he is, should wit larded with malice and malice forced with wit turn him to? To an ass, were nothing; he is both ass and ox: to an ox, were nothing; he is both ox and ass. To be a dog, a mule, a cat, a fitchew, a toad, a lizard, an owl, a puttock, or a herring without a roe, I would not

---

49 *quails*] harlots.

51–53 *the goodly transformation . . . cuckolds*] Agamemnon's brother, Menelaus, is somewhat confusedly likened, on account of the dishonour wrought him as husband by Helen's elopement and adultery, to Jupiter who metamorphosed himself into an horned bull in order to indulge his unlawful amours.

52 *oblique memorial*] figurative or metaphorical emblem.

53 *a thrifty shoeing-horn in a chain*] The expression carries on the sarcasm that Menelaus wears horns as Helen's deceived husband. He cannot take care of himself, and hangs on to his brother Agamemnon like a puny shoehorn to a chain.

55 *larded . . . forced*] garnished . . . stuffed; terms in cooking.

58 *fitchew*] polecat.

59 *a puttock*] a worthless kite.

*a herring without a roe*] Cf. *1 Hen. IV*, II, iv, 122–123, "a shotten herring," and *Rom. and Jul.*, II, iv, 37.

care; but to be Ménelaus! I would conspire against destiny. Ask me not what I would be, if I were not Thersites; for I care not to be the louse of a lazar, so I were not Menelaus. Hoy-day! spirits and fires!

*Enter* HECTOR, TROILUS, AJAX, AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES, NESTOR, MENELAUS, *and* DIOMEDES, *with lights*

AGAM. We go wrong, we go wrong.
AJAX. No, yonder 'tis;
There, where we see the lights.
HECT. I trouble you.
AJAX. No, not a whit.

*Re-enter* ACHILLES

ULYSS. Here comes himself to guide you.
ACHIL. Welcome, brave Hector; welcome, princes all.
AGAM. So now, fair Prince of Troy, I bid good night.
Ajax commands the guard to tend on you.
HECT. Thanks and good night to the Greeks' general.
MEN. Good night, my lord.
HECT. Good night, sweet Lord Menelaus.
THER. Sweet draught: sweet, quoth a'! sweet sink, sweet sewer.
ACHIL. Good night and welcome, both at once, to those
That go or tarry.

---

63 *spirits and fires!*] Thersites catches sight of the lights carried by Hector and his company, who now enter.

72–73 *draught . . . sink . . . sewer*] These words have all a like significance. Cf. *Tim. of Ath.*, V, i, 100: "drown them in a *draught*" (*i. e.*, jakes).

AGAM. Good night. [*Exeunt Agamemnon and Menelaus.*
ACHIL. Old Nestor tarries; and you too, Diomed,
Keep Hector company an hour or two.
DIO. I cannot, lord; I have important business,
The tide whereof is now. Good night, great Hector.
HECT. Give me your hand.
ULYSS. [*Aside to Troilus*] Follow his torch; he goes to Calchas' tent:
I'll keep you company.
TRO. Sweet sir, you honour me.
HECT. And so, good night.
[*Exit Diomedes; Ulysses and Troilus following.*
ACHIL. Come, come, enter my tent.
[*Exeunt Achilles, Hector, Ajax, and Nestor.*

THER. That same Diomed 's a false-hearted rogue, a most unjust knave; I will no more trust him when he leers than I will a serpent when he hisses: he will spend his mouth and promise, like Brabbler the hound; but when he performs, astronomers foretell it; it is prodigious, there will come some change; the sun borrows of the moon when Diomed keeps his word. I will rather leave to see Hector than not to dog him: they say he keeps a Trojan drab and uses the traitor Calchas' tent: I'll after. Nothing but lechery! all incontinent varlets! [*Exit.*

---

80 *tide*] season.

88–89 *spend his mouth . . . hound*] bark like a young hound, which sportsmen usually called a "brabbler."

90 *prodigious*] ominous, portentous.

92–93 *leave to see*] give up seeing.

## SCENE II — THE SAME — BEFORE CALCHAS' TENT

*Enter* DIOMEDES

DIO. What, are you up here, ho? speak.
CAL. [*Within*] Who calls?
DIO. Diomed. Calchas, I think. Where's your daughter?
CAL. [*Within*] She comes to you.

*Enter* TROILUS *and* ULYSSES, *at a distance; after them,* THERSITES

ULYSS. Stand where the torch may not discover us.

*Enter* CRESSIDA

TRO. Cressid comes forth to him.
DIO. How now, my charge!
CRES. Now, my sweet guardian! Hark, a word with you. [*Whispers.*
TRO. Yea, so familiar!
ULYSS. She will sing any man at first sight.
THER. And any man may sing her, if he can take her cliff; she's noted.
DIO. Will you remember?
CRES. Remember! yes.
DIO. Nay, but do, then;
And let your mind be coupled with your words.
TRO. What should she remember?
ULYSS. List.

---

11 *cliff*] a form of cleff, the key in music. The quibbling is continued in "she's *noted*," a word implying that Cressida is like the notes of a piece of music, which are at the service of any one who can read them.

CRES. Sweet honey Greek, tempt me no more to folly.
THER. Roguery!
DIO. Nay, then, —
CRES. I'll tell you what, —
DIO. Foh, foh! come, tell a pin: you are forsworn.
CRES. In faith, I cannot: what would you have me do?
THER. A juggling trick, — to be secretly open.
DIO. What did you swear you would bestow on me?
CRES. I prithee, do not hold me to mine oath;
Bid me do any thing but that, sweet Greek.
DIO. Good night.
TRO. Hold, patience!
ULYSS. How now, Trojan!
CRES. Diomed, —
DIO. No, no, good night: I'll be your fool no more.
TRO. Thy better must.
CRES. Hark, one word in your ear.
TRO. O plague and madness!
ULYSS. You are moved, prince; let us depart, I pray you,
Lest your displeasure should enlarge itself
To wrathful terms: this place is dangerous;
The time right deadly; I beseech you, go.
TRO. Behold, I pray you!
ULYSS. Nay, good my lord, go off:
You flow to great distraction; come, my lord.

---

22 *tell a pin*] an ejaculation of impatience, like "nonsense! not a bit of it!" Cf. *M. Wives*, I, i, 108: "Tut, a *pin!*"

36 *moved*] excited.

41 *You flow to great distraction*] You are going the way of utter mad-

TRO. I pray thee, stay.
ULYSS. You have not patience; come.
TRO. I pray you, stay; by hell and all hell's torments,
I will not speak a word.
DIO. And so, good night.
CRES. Nay, but you part in anger.
TRO. Doth that grieve thee?
O wither'd truth!
ULYSS. Why, how now, lord!
TRO. By Jove,
I will be patient.
CRES. Guardian! — why, Greek!
DIO. Foh, foh! adieu; you palter.
CRES. In faith, I do not: come hither once again.
ULYSS. You shake, my lord, at something: will you go?
You will break out.
TRO. She strokes his cheek!
ULYSS. Come, come.
TRO. Nay, stay; by Jove, I will not speak a word:
There is between my will and all offences
A guard of patience: stay a little while.
THER. How the devil luxury, with his fat rump and

---

ness, you are getting completely maddened. Thus the Folios. The Quartos read, less satisfactorily, *destruction* for *distraction*. Cf. V, iii, 85, *infra*, where again the Folios read *distraction* for the Quarto *destruction*.

48 *palter*] shuffle. Cf. II, iii, 227, *supra*.

55 *the devil luxury*] the sin of incontinence. Cf. *Lear*, IV, vi, 117: "To't, *luxury*, pell mell! for I lack soldiers."

potato-finger, tickles these together! Fry, lechery, fry!

DIO. But will you, then?
CRES. In faith, I will, la; never trust me else.
DIO. Give me some token for the surety of it.
CRES. I'll fetch you one. [*Exit.*
ULYSS. You have sworn patience.
TRO. Fear me not, sweet lord;
I will not be myself, nor have cognition
Of what I feel: I am all patience.

*Re-enter* CRESSIDA

TRO. Now the pledge; now, now, now!
CRES. Here, Diomed, keep this sleeve.
TRO. O beauty! where is thy faith?
ULYSS. My lord, —
TRO. I will be patient; outwardly I will.
CRES. You look upon that sleeve; behold it well.
He loved me — O false wench! — Give 't me again.
DIO. Whose was 't?
CRES. It is no matter, now I have 't again.
I will not meet with you to-morrow night:
I prithee, Diomed, visit me no more.
THER. Now she sharpens: well said, whetstone!
DIO. I shall have it.
CRES. What, this?
DIO. Ay, that.

---

56 *potato-finger*] The potato was regarded as an aphrodisiac, and is only noticed by Shakespeare in that significance. See *M. Wives*, V, v, 17, note.

65 *this sleeve*] the token which Troilus had given Cressida, IV, iv, 69, *supra*, in exchange for her glove.

Cres. O, all you gods! O pretty, pretty pledge!
Thy master now lies thinking in his bed
Of thee and me, and sighs, and takes my glove,
And gives memorial dainty kisses to it,
As I kiss thee. Nay, do not snatch it from me;
He that takes that doth take my heart withal.
Dio. I had your heart before; this follows it.
Tro. I did swear patience.
Cres. You shall not have it, Diomed; faith, you shall not;
I'll give you something else.
Dio. I will have this: whose was it?
Cres. It is no matter.
Dio. Come, tell me whose it was.
Cres. 'T was one's that loved me better than you will.
But, now you have it, take it.
Dio. Whose was it?
Cres. By all Diana's waiting-women yond,
And by herself, I will not tell you whose.
Dio. To-morrow will I wear it on my helm,
And grieve his spirit that dares not challenge it.
Tro. Wert thou the devil, and worest it on thy horn,
It should be challenged.
Cres. Well, well, 't is done, 't is past; and yet it is not;
I will not keep my word.

---

79 *memorial dainty kisses*] dainty kisses which refresh the memory.

80 *Nay, do . . . from me*] The old edition gives these words to Diomedes. Theobald transferred them to Cressida.

90 *Diana's waiting-women*] The stars that encircle Diana, the moon.

94 *Wert thou . . . horn*] In the morality plays the devil was invariably represented as wearing a formidable horn.

DIO. Why then, farewell;
Thou never shalt mock Diomed again.
CRES. You shall not go: one cannot speak a word,
But it straight starts you.
DIO. I do not like this fooling.
THER. Nor I, by Pluto: but that that likes not you
Pleases me best.
DIO. What, shall I come? the hour?
CRES. Ay, come: O Jove! do come: I shall be plagued.
DIO. Farewell till then.
CRES. Good night: I prithee, come.
[*Exit Diomedes.*
Troilus, farewell! one eye yet looks on thee,
But with my heart the other eye doth see.
Ah, poor our sex! this fault in us I find,
The error of our eye directs our mind:
What error leads must err; O, then conclude
Minds sway'd by eyes are full of turpitude. [*Exit.*
THER. A proof of strength she could not publish more
Unless she said "My mind is now turn'd whore."
ULYSS. All's done, my lord.
TRO. It is.
ULYSS. Why stay we then?
TRO. To make a recordation to my soul
Of every syllable that here was spoke.
But if I tell how these two did co-act,
Shall I not lie in publishing a truth?

---

106 *with my heart*] in accord with the new choice of my heart.
111 *A proof . . . more*] She could not proclaim a stronger proof.
114 *To make a recordation to my soul*] To make a record in my mind.

Sith yet there is a credence in my heart,
An esperance so obstinately strong,
That doth invert the attest of eyes and ears;
As if those organs had deceptious functions,
Created only to calumniate.
Was Cressid here?
ULYSS. I cannot conjure, Trojan.
TRO. She was not, sure.
ULYSS. Most sure she was.
TRO. Why, my negation hath no taste of madness.
ULYSS. Nor mine, my lord: Cressid was here but now.
TRO. Let it not be believed for womanhood!
Think, we had mothers; do not give advantage
To stubborn critics, apt without a theme
For depravation, to square the general sex
By Cressid's rule: rather think this not Cressid.
ULYSS. What hath she done, prince, that can soil our mothers?
TRO. Nothing at all, unless that this were she.
THER. Will a' swagger himself out on 's own eyes?
TRO. This she? no, this is Diomed's Cressida:
If beauty have a soul, this is not she;
If souls guide vows, if vows be sanctimonies,

---

119 *esperance*] hope; the French word.

120 *the attest*] Thus the Quartos. The First and Fourth Folios misprint *that test.*

123 *I cannot conjure*] I am not a magician. I cannot conjure up apparitions. No false image of Cressid was here.

129 *stubborn critics*] perverse libellers.

130 *depravation*] detraction.
*to square*] to measure.

132 *soil*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *spoile.*

If sanctimony be the gods' delight,
If there be rule in unity itself,
This is not she. O madness of discourse,
That cause sets up with and against itself!
Bi-fold authority! where reason can revolt
Without perdition, and loss assume all reason
Without revolt: this is, and is not, Cressid!
Within my soul there doth conduce a fight
Of this strange nature, that a thing inseparate
Divides more wider than the sky and earth;
And yet the spacious breadth of this division
Admits no orifex for a point as subtle
As Ariachne's broken woof to enter.

139 *If there be . . . itself*] If there be a rule that one is one.

140–144 *O madness . . . revolt*] O madness of reasoning when argument is advanced which tells at once for and against one point of view. Ambiguous is the authority which leads the reason to repudiate evidence of truth without involving its own destruction, and at the same time causes the mind, after losing all sense of the facts, to bear the aspect of sanity without contradiction. *By-fold authority* is the reading of the Quartos. The Folios read, less intelligibly, *By foul authority*, where "foul" must mean, if it be accepted, "discredited."

145 *conduce*] converge or assemble. Thus the old editions. Rowe substituted *commence*.

146 *inseparate*] indissoluble.

148–150 *the spacious . . . enter*] the wide expanse which intervenes between earth and heaven knits them together so closely that there seems no dividing passage between them at all. Thus, Troilus subtly reasons, the plighted troth of love is indissoluble.

149 *orifex*] orifice, opening.

150 *Ariachne*] An apparent confusion between Arachne the maid of Lydia, whom Minerva changed into a spider for challenging the goddess' supreme skill in weaving (cf. Ovid, *Metam.*, VI, i, *seq.*) and

Instance, O instance! strong as Pluto's gates;
Cressid is mine, tied with the bonds of heaven:
Instance, O instance! strong as heaven itself;
The bonds of heaven are slipp'd, dissolved and loosed;
And with another knot, five-finger-tied,
The fractions of her faith, orts of her love,
The fragments, scraps, the bits and greasy relics
Of her o'er-eaten faith, are bound to Diomed.
  ULYSS. May worthy Troilus be half attach'd
With that which here his passion doth express?
  TRO. Ay, Greek; and that shall be divulged well
In characters as red as Mars his heart
Inflamed with Venus: never did young man fancy
With so eternal and so fix'd a soul.
Hark, Greek: as much as I do Cressid love,
So much by weight hate I her Diomed:
That sleeve is mine that he 'll bear on his helm:
Were it a casque composed by Vulcan's skill,
My sword should bite it: not the dreadful spout
Which shipmen do the hurricano call,

---

Ariadne of Naxos, the beloved of Theseus, who released her from the labyrinth in which the Minotaur confined her, by means of the clue of thread with which she supplied him. Cf. *Two Gent.*, IV, iv, 168. Doubtless metrical exigencies encouraged Shakespeare's mistake.

151 *Instance*] Proof, example.

155 *five-finger-tied*] tied with her whole hand.

156 *orts*] refuse, leavings.

158 *o'er-eaten faith*] faithfulness of which she had surfeited.

159–160 *be half attach'd With that which*] seriously feel half of that which.

163 *fancy*] love.

170 *hurricano*] waterspout. Cf. *Lear*, III, ii, 2: "You cataracts and *hurricanoes*, spout."

Constringed in mass by the almighty sun,
Shall dizzy with more clamour Neptune's ear
In his descent, than shall my prompted sword
Falling on Diomed.
  Ther. He 'll tickle it for his concupy.
  Tro. O Cressid! O false Cressid! false, false, false!
Let all untruths stand by thy stained name,
And they'll seem glorious.
  Ulyss. O, contain yourself;
Your passion draws ears hither.

*Enter* Æneas

  Æne. I have been seeking you this hour, my lord:
Hector by this is arming him in Troy;
Ajax your guard stays to conduct you home.
  Tro. Have with you, prince. My courteous lord, adieu.
Farewell, revolted fair! and, Diomed,
Stand fast, and wear a castle on thy head!
  Ulyss. I'll bring you to the gates.
  Tro. Accept distracted thanks.
*[Exeunt Troilus, Æneas, and Ulysses.*

Ther. Would I could meet that rogue Diomed! I would croak like a raven; I would bode, I would bode. Patroclus will give me any thing for the intelligence of

---

171 *Constringed in mass*] All drawn tight together.

175 *He 'll tickle it*] He'll punish him.
*concupy*] concupiscence, lust; a jesting form.

177 *untruths*] faithless persons.

185 *wear . . . head*] guard your head with armour of the greatest possible strength. Cf. the proverbial phrase "as safe as in a castle."

189 *bode*] be of evil portent, prophecy evil.

this whore: the parrot will not do more for an almond than he for a commodious drab. Lechery, lechery! still wars and lechery! nothing else holds fashion. A burning devil take them! [*Exit.*

## SCENE III — TROY

### *BEFORE PRIAM'S PALACE*

*Enter* HECTOR *and* ANDROMACHE

AND. When was my lord so much ungently temper'd,
To stop his ears against admonishment?
Unarm, unarm, and do not fight to-day.
HECT. You train me to offend you; get you in:
By all the everlasting gods, I'll go!
AND. My dreams will, sure, prove ominous to the day.
HECT. No more, I say.

*Enter* CASSANDRA

CAS. Where is my brother Hector?
AND. Here, sister; arm'd, and bloody in intent.
Consort with me in loud and dear petition;
Pursue we him on knees; for I have dream'd
Of bloody turbulence, and this whole night
Hath nothing been but shapes and forms of slaughter.

---

191 *the parrot . . . almond*] a proverbial phrase suggestive of irresistible desire. The converse of the expression, "An almond for a parrot," was the title of a popular tract in the "Martin Marprelate" controversy, 1589.

192 *commodious*] accommodating.

193–194 *A burning devil*] A reference to venereal fever.

9 *dear*] desperate.

CAS. O, 't is true.
HECT. Ho! bid my trumpet sound!
CAS. No notes of sally, for the heavens, sweet brother.
HECT. Be gone, I say: the gods have heard me swear.
CAS. The gods are deaf to hot and peevish vows:
They are polluted offerings, more abhorr'd
Than spotted livers in the sacrifice.
AND. O, be persuaded! do not count it holy
To hurt by being just: it is as lawful,
For we would give much, to use violent thefts
And rob in the behalf of charity.
CAS. It is the purpose that makes strong the vow;
But vows to every purpose must not hold:
Unarm, sweet Hector.
HECT. Hold you still, I say;
Mine honour keeps the weather of my fate:
Life every man holds dear; but the dear man
Holds honour far more precious-dear than life.

*Enter* TROILUS

How now, young man! mean'st thou to fight to-day?
AND. Cassandra, call my father to persuade.
[*Exit Cassandra.*

---

16 *hot and peevish*] hot-headed and stupid.

20–22 *To hurt . . . charity*] These lines are omitted from the Quartos.

21 *For we . . . thefts*] The Folio here inserts *count* after *would* and misprints *use* as *as; count* is due to a printer's mistaken vision in repeating the word from line 19. Tyrwhitt made the needful correction. "For" means "because."

26 *keeps the weather of*] has or maintains superior control of; a nautical expression like "keep the wind of."

27 *the dear man*] the true, earnest man.

Hect. No, faith, young Troilus; doff thy harness, youth:
I am to-day i' the vein of chivalry:
Let grow thy sinews till their knots be strong,
And tempt not yet the brushes of the war.
Unarm thee, go; and doubt thou not, brave boy,
I 'll stand to-day for thee and me and Troy.
Tro. Brother, you have a vice of mercy in you,
Which better fits a lion than a man.
Hect. What vice is that, good Troilus? chide me for it.
Tro. When many times the captive Grecian falls,
Even in the fan and wind of your fair sword,
You bid them rise and live.
Hect. O, 't is fair play.
Tro. Fool's play, by heaven, Hector.
Hect. How now! how now!
Tro. For the love of all the gods,
Let's leave the hermit pity with our mother;
And when we have our armours buckled on,
The venom'd vengeance ride upon our swords,
Spur them to ruthful work, rein them from ruth!
Hect. Fie, savage, fie!
Tro. Hector, then 't is wars.
Hect. Troilus, I would not have you fight to-day.

---

31 *harness*] armour.

32 *i' the vein of chivalry*] in the heroic vein.

34 *brushes*] collisions.

38 *better fits a lion*] In medieval authors the lion was invariably credited with a generous temperament, especially to prostrate victims.

48 *ruthful*] piteous, exciting pity, brutal. "Ruth" means "pity."

TRO. Who should withold me?
Not fate, obedience, nor the hand of Mars
Beckoning with fiery truncheon my retire;
Not Priamus and Hecuba on knees,
Their eyes o'ergalled with recourse of tears;
Nor you, my brother, with your true sword drawn,
Opposed to hinder me, should stop my way,
But by my ruin.

*Re-enter* CASSANDRA, *with* PRIAM

CAS. Lay hold upon him, Priam, hold him fast:
He is thy crutch; now if thou lose thy stay,
Thou on him leaning, and all Troy on thee,
Fall all together.
PRI. Come, Hector, come, go back:
Thy wife hath dream'd; thy mother hath had visions;
Cassandra doth foresee; and I myself
Am like a prophet suddenly enrapt,
To tell thee that this day is ominous:
Therefore, come back.
HECT. Æneas is afield;
And I do stand engaged to many Greeks,
Even in the faith of valour, to appear
This morning to them.
PRI. Ay, but thou shalt not go.
HECT. I must not break my faith.

---

55 *o'ergalled . . . tears*] greatly inflamed with constant flow of tears.
58 *But . . . ruin*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos omit the line.
65 *enrapt*] in ecstasy.
69 *in the faith of valour*] by dint of honour which holds among valorous men.

You know me dutiful; therefore, dear sir,
Let me not shame respect; but give me leave
To take that course by your consent and voice,
Which you do here forbid me, royal Priam.
  CAS. O Priam, yield not to him!
  AND. Do not, dear father.
  HECT. Andromache, I am offended with you:
Upon the love you bear me, get you in.
[*Exit Andromache.*
  TRO. This foolish, dreaming, superstitious girl
Makes all these bodements.
  CAS. O, farewell, dear Hector!
Look, how thou diest! look, how thy eye turns pale!
Look, how thy wounds do bleed at many vents!
Hark, how Troy roars! how Hecuba cries out!
How poor Andromache shrills her dolours forth!
Behold, distraction, frenzy and amazement,
Like witless antics, one another meet,
And all cry "Hector! Hector's dead! O Hector!"
  TRO. Away! away!
  CAS. Farewell: yet, soft! Hector, I take my leave:
Thou dost thyself and all our Troy deceive. [*Exit.*
  HECT. You are amazed, my liege, at her exclaim:

---

73 *shame respect*] disgrace the filial relation.

80 *bodements*] presages of evil.

84 *shrills . . . forth*] screams out her lamentation.

85 *distraction*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *destruction*. Cf. V, ii, 41, *supra*.

85 *amazement*] utter bewilderment.

86 *antics*] buffoons.

91 *exclaim*] outcry.

Go in and cheer the town: we'll forth and fight,
Do deeds worth praise and tell you them at night.

PRI. Farewell: the gods with safety stand about thee!
[*Exeunt severally Priam and Hector. Alarum.*

TRO. They are at it, hark! Proud Diomed, believe,
I come to lose my arm, or win my sleeve.

*Enter* PANDARUS

PAN. Do you hear, my lord? do you hear?

TRO. What now?

PAN. Here's a letter come from yond poor girl.

TRO. Let me read.

PAN. A whoreson tisick, a whoreson rascally tisick so troubles me, and the foolish fortune of this girl; and what one thing, what another, that I shall leave you one o' these days: and I have a rheum in mine eyes too, and such an ache in my bones that, unless a man were cursed, I cannot tell what to think on't. What says she there?

TRO. Words, words, mere words, no matter from the heart;
The effect doth operate another way. [*Tearing the letter.*
Go, wind, to wind, there turn and change together.
My love with words and errors still she feeds,
But edifies another with her deeds. [*Exeunt severally.*

---

101 *tisick*] cough, phthisic.

104 *a rheum*] a tearful flow.

105–106 *unless a man were cursed*] unless I were under a ban.

112 *her deeds*] The First Folio here needlessly inserts three lines exchanged by Pandarus and Troilus on parting, which are repeated again, *infra*, Scene x, lines 32–34. See note there.

## SCENE IV — THE FIELD BETWEEN TROY AND THE GRECIAN CAMP

*Alarums. Excursions. Enter* THERSITES

THER. Now they are clapper-clawing one another; I 'll go look on. That dissembling abominable varlet, Diomed, has got that same scurvy doting foolish young knave's sleeve of Troy there in his helm: I would fain see them meet; that that same young Trojan ass, that loves the whore there, might send that Greekish whoremasterly villain, with the sleeve, back to the dissembling luxurious drab, of a sleeveless errand. O' the t'other side, the policy of those crafty swearing rascals, that stale old mouse-eaten dry cheese, Nestor, and that same dog-fox, Ulysses, is not proved worth a blackberry. They set me up in policy that mongrel cur, Ajax, against that dog of as bad a kind, Achilles: and now is the cur Ajax prouder than the cur Achilles, and will not arm to-day; whereupon the Grecians begin to proclaim barbarism, and policy grows into an ill opinion.

---

1 *clapper-clawing*] handling or mauling. See the publisher's preface to the Second Quarto of this play, "a new play never *clapper-claw'd with the palmes* of the vulger."

8 *luxurious*] lascivious.

*sleeveless*] useless, unprofitable.

9 *swearing rascals*] hardly an appropriate epithet for Ulysses and Nestor, even in Thersites' abusive mouth. Theobald suggested *sneering*.

15–16 *the Grecians . . . opinion*] the Greeks begin to announce devotion to the cause of barbarism, and civil rule falls into ill repute.

*Enter* DIOMEDES *and* TROILUS

Soft! here comes sleeve, and t'other.

TRO. Fly not; for shouldst thou take the river Styx,
I would swim after.

DIO. Thou dost miscall retire:
I do not fly; but advantageous care
Withdrew me from the odds of multitude:
Have at thee!

THER. Hold thy whore, Grecian! Now for thy whore, Trojan! Now the sleeve, now the sleeve!

[*Exeunt Troilus and Diomedes, fighting.*

*Enter* HECTOR

HECT. What art thou, Greek? art thou for Hector's match?
Art thou of blood and honour?

THER. No, no: I am a rascal; a scurvy railing knave; a very filthy rogue.

HECT. I do believe thee. Live. [*Exit.*

THER. God-a-mercy, that thou wilt believe me; but a plague break thy neck for frighting me! What's become of the wenching rogues? I think they have swallowed one another: I would laugh at that miracle: yet in a sort lechery eats itself. I'll seek them. [*Exit.*

---

20 *advantageous care*] caution in order to secure the advantage.

## SCENE V — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

*Enter* DIOMEDES *and* Servant

DIO. Go, go, my servant, take thou Troilus' horse;
Present the fair steed to my lady Cressid:
Fellow, commend my service to her beauty;
Tell her I have chastised the amorous Trojan,
And am her knight by proof.
SER. I go, my lord. [*Exit.*

*Enter* AGAMEMNON

AGAM. Renew, renew! The fierce Polydamas
Hath beat down Menon: bastard Margarelon
Hath Doreus prisoner,
And stands colossus-wise, waving his beam,
Upon the pashed corses of the kings
Epistrophus and Cedius: Polyxenes is slain;
Amphimachus and Thoas deadly hurt;
Patroclus ta'en or slain; and Palamedes
Sore hurt and bruised: the dreadful sagittary
Appals our numbers: haste we, Diomed,
To reinforcement, or we perish all.

---

7 *bastard Margarelon*] A Trojan warrior invented by medieval tradition; he figures in the pseudo-Homeric romances of both Lydgate and Caxton.

9 *his beam*] the shaft of his spear.

10 *pashed*] crushed, pounded. Cf. II, iii, 198, *supra*.

14 *the dreadful sagittary*] a centaur archer, who according to the medieval tradition fought on the Trojan side.

*Enter* Nestor

Nest. Go, bear Patroclus' body to Achilles,
And bid the snail-paced Ajax arm for shame.
There is a thousand Hectors in the field:
Now here he fights on Galathe his horse,
And there lacks work; anon he's there afoot,
And there they fly or die, like scaled sculls
Before the belching whale; then is he yonder,
And there the strawy Greeks, ripe for his edge,
Fall down before him, like the mower's swath:
Here, there and every where he leaves and takes,
Dexterity so obeying appetite
That what he will he does, and does so much
That proof is call'd impossibility.

*Enter* Ulysses

Ulyss. O, courage, courage, princes! great Achilles
Is arming, weeping, cursing, vowing vengeance:
Patroclus' wounds have roused his drowsy blood,
Together with his mangled Myrmidons,

---

20 *Galathe his horse*] Medieval tradition gives this name to Hector's horse.

22 *like scaled sculls*] like schools or shoals of fish, which are furnished with scales.

24 *strawy*] like straw. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read wrongly *straying*.

25 *swath*] the amount of grass cut down by a single stroke of the scythe.

29 *proof is call'd impossibility*] what proves true is dubbed impossible; impossibility is converted into proved fact.

That noseless, handless, hack'd and chipp'd, come to him,
Crying on Hector. Ajax hath lost a friend,
And foams at mouth, and he is arm'd, and at it,
Roaring for Troilus; who hath done to-day
Mad and fantastic execution,
Engaging and redeeming of himself,
With such a careless force and forceless care,
As if that luck, in very spite of cunning,
Bade him win all.

*Enter* AJAX

AJAX. Troilus! thou coward Troilus! [*Exit.*
DIO. Ay, there, there.
NEST. So, so, we draw together.

*Enter* ACHILLES

ACHIL. Where is this Hector?
Come, come, thou boy-queller, show thy face;
Know what it is to meet Achilles angry:
Hector! where's Hector? I will none but Hector.
[*Exeunt.*

---

35 *Crying on Hector*] Exclaiming against Hector.

44 *we draw together*] we are pulling together; a reference to Ajax's recent alienation from the Greeks.

45 *boy-queller*] boy-killer; "quell" is an old word for "kill." Hector had killed Patroclus.

## SCENE VI — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

*Enter* AJAX

AJAX. Troilus, thou coward Troilus, show thy head!

*Enter* DIOMEDES

DIO. Troilus, I say! where's Troilus?
AJAX. What wouldst thou?
DIO. I would correct him.
AJAX. Were I the general, thou shouldst have my office
Ere that correction. Troilus, I say! what, Troilus!

*Enter* TROILUS

TRO. O traitor Diomed! Turn thy false face, thou traitor,
And pay thy life thou owest me for my horse.
DIO. Ha, art thou there?
AJAX. I'll fight with him alone: stand, Diomed.
DIO. He is my prize; I will not look upon.
TRO. Come both, you cogging Greeks; have at you both! [*Exeunt, fighting.*

*Enter* HECTOR

HECT. Yea, Troilus? O, well fought, my youngest brother!

---

10 *look upon*] look on, stand by as an onlooker.
11 *cogging*] cheating.

*Enter* ACHILLES

ACHIL. Now do I see thee; ha! have at thee,
Hector!
HECT. Pause, if thou wilt.
ACHIL. I do disdain thy courtesy, proud Trojan:
Be happy that my arms are out of use:
My rest and negligence befriends thee now,
But thou anon shalt hear of me again;
Till when, go seek thy fortune. [*Exit.*
HECT. Fare thee well:
I would have been much more a fresher man,
Had I expected thee.

*Re-enter* TROILUS

How now, my brother!
TRO. Ajax hath ta'en Æneas: shall it be?
No, by the flame of yonder glorious heaven,
He shall not carry him; I'll be ta'en too,
Or bring him off. Fate, hear me what I say!
I reck not though I end my life to-day. [*Exit.*

*Enter one in sumptuous armour*

HECT. Stand, stand, thou Greek; thou art a goodly
mark.
No? wilt thou not? I like thy armour well;
I'll frush it, and unlock the rivets all,
But I 'll be master of it. Wilt thou not, beast, abide?
Why then, fly on, I'll hunt thee for thy hide. [*Exeunt.*

---

24 *carry*] triumph over.
29 *frush it*] break it up. Not used elsewhere by Shakespeare.

## SCENE VII — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

*Enter* ACHILLES, *with* Myrmidons

ACHIL. Come here about me, you my Myrmidons;
Mark what I say. Attend me where I wheel:
Strike not a stroke, but keep yourselves in breath:
And when I have the bloody Hector found,
Empale him with your weapons round about;
In fellest manner execute your aims.
Follow me, sirs, and my proceedings eye:
It is decreed Hector the great must die. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter* MENELAUS *and* PARIS, *fighting: then* THERSITES

THER. The cuckold and the cuckold-maker are at it. Now, bull! now, dog! 'loo, Paris, 'loo! now my double-henned sparrow! 'loo, Paris, 'loo! The bull has the game: ware horns, ho! [*Exeunt Paris and Menelaus.*

*Enter* MARGARELON

MAR. Turn, slave, and fight.

THER. What art thou?

MAR. A bastard son of Priam's.

THER. I am a bastard too; I love bastards: I am a bastard begot, bastard instructed, bastard in mind, bastard in valour, in every thing illegitimate. One bear

---

6 *aims*] Capell's emendation of the original reading *arms*. But "execute your arms" might well be retained in the sense of "put your arms to full use."

will not bite another, and wherefore should one bastard? Take heed, the quarrel 's most ominous to us: if the son of a whore fight for a whore, he tempts judgement: farewell, bastard. [*Exit.*

MAR. The devil take thee, coward! [*Exit.*

## SCENE VIII — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

*Enter* HECTOR

HECT. Most putrefied core, so fair without,
Thy goodly armour thus hath cost thy life.
Now is my day's work done; I 'll take good breath:
Rest, sword; thou hast thy fill of blood and death.
[*Puts off his helmet and hangs his shield behind him.*

*Enter* ACHILLES *and* Myrmidons

ACHIL. Look, Hector, how the sun begins to set;
How ugly night comes breathing at his heels:
Even with the vail and darking of the sun,
To close the day up, Hector's life is done.
HECT. I am unarm'd; forgo this vantage, Greek.
ACHIL. Strike, fellows, strike; this is the man I seek.
[*Hector falls.*
So, Ilion, fall thou next! now, Troy, sink down!
Here lies thy heart, thy sinews, and thy bone.

---

1 *Most putrefied core*] Most rotten at heart. Hector apostrophises the corpse of the "one in sumptuous armour" whom he attacked at the close of Scene vi, *supra*. Cf. stage direction before line 27 there.

7 *the vail*] the setting or lowering.

On, Myrmidons; and cry you all amain,
"Achilles hath the mighty Hector slain."
[*A retreat sounded.*
Hark! a retire upon our Grecian part.
MYR. The Trojan trumpets sound the like, my lord.
ACHIL. The dragon wing of night o'erspreads the earth,
And stickler-like the armies separates.
My half-supp'd sword that frankly would have fed,
Pleased with this dainty bait, thus goes to bed.
[*Sheathes his sword.*
Come, tie his body to my horse's tail;
Along the field I will the Trojan trail.
[*Exeunt. A retreat sounded.*

## SCENE IX — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

*Enter* AGAMEMNON, AJAX, MENELAUS, NESTOR, DIOMEDES, *and the rest, marching. Shouts within*

AGAM. Hark! hark! what shout is that?
NEST. Peace, drums!
[*Within*] "Achilles! Achilles! Hector's slain! Achilles!"

---

17 *dragon wing of night*] In classical mythology the chariot of night was drawn by flying dragons. Cf. *Cymb.*, II, ii, 48: "*dragons* of the *night.*"

18 *stickler-like*] like an umpire, who armed with a stick or wand was wont to separate combatants in sporting competitions.

19–20 *My half-supp'd . . . bed*] Pope placed these lines in the margin as quite unworthy of Shakespeare.

20 *bait*] Thus the Quartos. The First Folio reads *bed*, and the other Folios *bit.*

Dio. The bruit is, Hector's slain, and by Achilles.
Ajax. If it be so, yet bragless let it be;
Great Hector was a man as good as he.
Agam. March patiently along: let one be sent
To pray Achilles see us at our tent.
If in his death the gods have us befriended,
Great Troy is ours, and our sharp wars are ended.
[*Exeunt, marching.*

## SCENE X—ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

*Enter* Æneas, Paris, Antenor, *and* Deiphobus

Æne. Stand, ho! yet are we masters of the field:
Never go home; here starve we out the night.

*Enter* Troilus

Tro. Hector is slain.
All. Hector! The gods forbid!
Tro. He's dead; and at the murderer's horse's tail
In beastly sort dragg'd through the shameful field.
Frown on, you heavens, effect your rage with speed!
Sit, gods, upon your thrones, and smile at Troy!
I say, at once let your brief plagues be mercy,
And linger not our sure destructions on!
Æne. My lord, you do discomfort all the host.

---

4 *bruit*] rumour, report.

Sc. X, 7 *Sit, gods . . . smile at Troy*] Cf. *Psalms*, ii, 4: "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision."

9 *linger not . . . . on*] do not protract.

TRO. You understand me not that tell me so:
I do not speak of flight, of fear, of death,
But dare all imminence that gods and men
Address their dangers in. Hector is gone:
Who shall tell Priam so, or Hecuba?
Let him that will a screech-owl aye be call'd,
Go in to Troy, and say there "Hector's dead:"
There is a word will Priam turn to stone,
Make wells and Niobes of the maids and wives,
Cold statues of the youth, and, in a word,
Scare Troy out of itself. But march away:
Hector is dead; there is no more to say.
Stay yet. You vile abominable tents,
Thus proudly pight upon our Phrygian plains,
Let Titan rise as early as he dare,
I 'll through and through you! and, thou great-sized coward,
No space of earth shall sunder our two hates:
I 'll haunt thee like a wicked conscience still,
That mouldeth goblins swift as frenzy's thoughts.
Strike a free march to Troy! with comfort go:
Hope of revenge shall hide our inward woe.

[*Exeunt Æneas and Trojans.*

---

13 *imminence*] impending evil.

16 *screech-owl*] The owl's screech was reckoned to proclaim evil tidings.

19 *Niobes*] Cf. *Hamlet*, I, ii, 149: "Like *Niobe*, all tears." Niobe is the ordinary type of excessive weeping. Ovid tells her story in his *Metam.*, VI, 146–312.

24 *pight*] pitched: an archaic form.

25 *Titan*] the sun; a frequent usage.

31 *Hope of revenge . . . woe*] Some sagacious critics would end the piece here. Pandarus' epilogue is certainly contemptible. It would

*As* TROILUS *is going out, enter, from the other side,* PANDARUS

PAN. But hear you, hear you!

TRO. Hence, broker-lackey! ignomy and shame
Pursue thy life, and live aye with thy name! [*Exit.*

PAN. A goodly medicine for my aching bones! O world! world! world! thus is the poor agent despised! O traitors and bawds, how earnestly are you set a-work, and how ill requited! why should our endeavour be so loved and the performance so loathed? what verse for it? what instance for it? Let me see:

Full merrily the humble-bee doth sing,
Till he hath lost his honey and his sting;
And being once subdued in armed tail,
Sweet honey and sweet notes together fail.

Good traders in the flesh, set this in your painted cloths:

As many as be here of Pandar's hall,
Your eyes, half out, weep out at Pandar's fall;

---

almost seem too as if Pandarus' epilogue (lines 35–55), if it be retained at all, should be relegated, with the three lines preceding it (32–34, *But hear you . . . with thy name!*), to the end of Scene iii, *supra.* Those three lines are in the Folios inserted there and are repeated here. They are obviously not required in both places. They seem to be more appropriate in the earlier place.

33 *broker-lackey*] go-between.

*ignomy*] a common abbreviation of ignominy.

37 *O traitors and bawds*] W. J. Craig aptly suggested "O *traders* and bawds." At line 45 the speaker apostrophises "Good *traders* in the flesh," — a phrase which supports this emendation.

45 *painted cloths*] tapestries or wall-hangings ornamented with pictorial designs and illustrative moral or scriptural maxims.

Or if you cannot weep, yet give some groans,
Though not for me, yet for your aching bones.
Brethren and sisters of the hold-door trade,
Some two months hence my will shall here be made:
It should be now, but that my fear is this,
Some galled goose of Winchester would hiss:
Till then I'll sweat and seek about for eases,
And at that time bequeath you my diseases. [*Exit.*

---

53 *Some galled goose of Winchester*] Some sufferer from venereal disease, whom my words gall. The disease was colloquially called "Winchester goose," because the quarter in Southwark, the chief haunt of London prostitutes, was the property of the see of Winchester.

54 *I 'll sweat*] Sweating-baths played a chief part in the treatment of sufferers from venereal disease.

# OTHELLO

ACT II SCENE I, LINE 1.

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# INTRODUCTION

## I

IN 1622 "N. O." printed for Thomas Walkly: "and are to be sold at his Shop, at the Sign of the Eagle and Child, in Brittan's Bursse": the "Tragœdy of Othello the Moore of Venice," as it had been "divers times acted at the Globe and at the Black-Friars by his Maiestie's Servants." This is the first "Othello." "To commend it I will not," Walkly says; "for that which is good I hope every man will commend, without entreaty; and I am the bolder because the Author's name is sufficient to vent his work." Then, the year after (1623), came the First Folio; and in 1630 Walkly, who seems to have been in pocket by his earlier venture, published a Second Quarto. It is of no particular interest or importance: the text, as we have it, being Walkly *plus* Heminge and Condell, the First Quarto *plus* the First Folio. The latter version is longer than Walkly's by some hundred and fifty lines; but the Walkly, printed (Mr. Herford conjectures) "from an old copy of the play, as curtailed, and otherwise modified, for performance," is very much richer in "oaths and expletives" than the Heminge and Condell, and is therefore of respectable authority. As the first recorded performance of "Othello" is dated 1604: in the November of which year it was presented before the Court at Whitehall: and as the style, as beseems the subject, is "simple, sensuous, and passionate" to the *n*th degree: a style with memories of "Hamlet," yet with scarce a foretaste of "Macbeth": it is assumed that 1604 was the birth-year of this unrivalled achievement in intimate, or domestic, drama, and that the text, as we have it, is very much the text that left Shakespeare's hand.

## II

The material is engagingly old and plain, at the same time that it is unalterably and essentially eternal. As stated by a critic of a day or two ago, a critic, by the way, of the same name as the "Moore's" first printer, it is simply the story of what your Modern Frenchman has elected to denote and to discriminate as *un crime passionnel*. In Cinthio's "Hecatommithi," where Shakespeare found the raw suggestion of his mighty and magnificent presentation of jealousy: of jealousy, too, in its operation on a mind which, rich in other sorts of experience, is, sexually speaking, next door to virginal: the passional crime is ever so much more persuasively paragraphed than it is in Mr. Walkley's amiable *boutade;* for in Cinthio the hero is not Othello (he is not so much, I believe, as named by name) but Iago, his Ensign, "in love with Disdemona."[1] To that fair and innocent creature Cinthio's Antient imparts the purpose of his passion; she understands him not; he instantly conceives her enamoured of the party we know as Michael Cassio. So he goes to work, corrupts the Moor, plots Desdemona's death, and the Lieutenant's; and, in the end, after sand-bagging the object of his passion into the other world in her husband's presence, pulling down the ceiling upon her broken body, and giving out that she has been killed by a fallen beam, turns on the Moor, accuses him of murder, gets him tortured and done to death, and, having thus justified his Renaissance habit, and purged himself of his *crime d'amour*, goes gallantly to justice on a different count, and accepts the sweet compulsion of the Rope for another crime. It is in this rather blackguard story of a blackguard lecher's disappointment and revenge that our Archimage discovered his "Othello." He astonishes always, when you come to look into his treatment of other men's material. His method is ever royal: he lays hands on what he wants, and the fact that he wants it makes it his, and none else's. I know not that, anywhere in his work, is there discovered so clear a proof of sovranty as here. Othello, Iago, Cassio,

---

[1] This is Cinthio's spelling of the Shakespearean Desdemona.

Emilia, Desdemona — even the Handkerchief — all these figure in the twenty-seventh of the "Hecatommithi." Yet to compare the *Novella* and the Play is to live in two worlds at once, and, so living, to be utterly and everlastingly cognisant of the inexpressible difference between creation as Cinthio understood and practised it, and creation as it was apprehended and done by William Shakespeare.

## III

In Cinthio's anecdote, or *compte-rendu*, the interest is almost wholly one of incident. The Novelist, or Reporter, is primarily concerned with — not character, nor action in its effect on character, but — action for its own sake, action as material for narrative. His Moor, his Lieutenant, his Desdemona, are counters all: such character-interest as he discovers is contained in his Antient; and he even is no more personal than any trim, literal incarnation of the clear-eyed, clean-minded, self-seeking, ruthless, self-sufficing scoundrelism of Cesare Borgia would be. Cinthio's Antient is wholly lacking in those touches of doubt, those instants of inquiry, those hints and flashes of internal conflict, those glimpes of desperate debate between Mind and Appetite, between Brain and Temperament, which lend so potent and so variable a magic to the portraiture of that strange, brilliant, evil-speaking, evil-thinking, evil-doing "demi-devil": that parcel-tamed, over-civilised man-eating tiger, which we know as Iago. He is Cinthio's hero; but in Cinthio his psychology remains obscure: in fact, we know as much and as little of him as we know of the chief agent in any criminal affair which was reported yesterday. Stated in Police Court terms: he is a subaltern, who tries to lie with his General's wife; failing in his intent, he gets jealous of an airy rival; poisons his General's ear; has the satisfaction of bruising the lady of his desire to death — as a positive confirmed whore too! — in the eye of him he'd fain have cuckolded; experiences a wolfish joy in the death of that once potential horned beast; and, in the end, is himself sent down to the Pit on quite other grounds than poor Desdemona's broken breast-bone and spine, and with never so much as a memory or a thought of the cuckold that was not to be, whom he had escorted to the bounds of Space and Time with every circumstance of miserableness and hate. That is pretty much as he half-exists in the "Hecatommithi": for the simple reason that Cinthio, having made him play his part, with supreme success, in the affairs of Desdemona and the Moor, as a good enough Renaissance Italian, a Cesare Borgia on the smallest scale, was content to ask no more of him, but to let him end even as, in an enlightened Italy, such small change of Machiavelli's ideal Prince might end, and very often did. In "Othello" all this is changed: Iago quits the Police-Court (so to say) for the purlieus of Humanity, and, instead of depending for immortality on the word of a mere reporter, is taken up, and shaken, and squeezed, and made to know something of himself, and to make that much of himself he knows, and a great deal besides, intelligible to others, by the greatest *manieur d'hommes* that ever lived. The result is such an exemplary presentation of active, motiveless, and militant wickedness as Balzac, say — the Balzac of Philippe Bridau and Cousin Betty — has not so much as approached.

## IV

Is it quite made out? I am reluctant to determine. I think it is; but I have to admit that, if it be, the achievement is accomplished largely by means of soliloquy: an expedient in dramatic art abominable to the play-going mind. Yet was it a common device with Shakespeare, to whom its practice saved much trouble: nay, made things possible which in its absence could not have been essayed. Accepting it for the compromise it is, you may say, I think, that, thanks to its use, Iago is entirely credible. Despite the majestic assurance and completeness of his presentment as a chief actor in the play, we should not know him as we do if we were denied the privilege of sitting with him in the privy chamber of his thought, and taking our fill, and more, of those terrible mental practices by which he seeks, in the dry light of an excellent and daring intelligence, to reconcile his action with his conscience, his processes with his results, and, half in earnest, half in jest, as it were to excuse himself before his soul. He is a piece of pure intellect: he has gaiety, wit, invention, a kind of lethal humour; he is versed in "politic authors," and, besides, he is deeply read in the books of Character and Life, so that he "knows all qualities of human dealing with a most learned spirit"; he discovers in himself a fine observer, a shrewd and gluttonous critic; first and last he is high in resolve, cruel of heart, swift and resolute of hand; in speech he is liberal to the point of intemperance, with an odd trick of obscenity, whether suggested or phrased, which he has practised till it has mastered him, and in which the World, if it were but wise, would find proof indubitable of the inherent baseness of his mind. Said a fine critic to me long years ago, in the great Salvini times: "You may meet Iago on any Yorkshire race-course"; and, the inevitable mutations duly made, I take the remark to be intrinsically just. Palmer of Rugely, the poisoning creature, was of Iago's type and strain; and the Ring breeds many such potential beasts of prey. These are the men who kill, and are half surprised and half angered to find, as they generally do, that Killing is called *Murder*, is an offence before the Law, and must be expiated on the Gallows. These wretches play with Evil much as a young man plays with Life; and are just as sorry for themselves when they come to the unchanging end.

For the rest, Iago, like his kind at large, is wholly the creature of the Event he quickens and stage-manages. He gulls Roderigo, he gulls Cassio, he gulls Othello into killing Desdemona, and essaying to compass his Lieutenant's murder. But, though he never so much as suspect it, the mortal issue he has made imminent masters him ever, and, being determined, leaves him the most wretched slave this side Eternity. He starts by "guying" an aged and respectable Senator on a most delicate and peculiar point of honour, in terms so rank that Shakespeare himself, good as he was at filth (and none better ever lived), has not improved on them; he ends as the murderer whole or parcel-gilt of Othello, Desdemona, Roderigo, and Emilia, with a bad wound in his body, the assurance of being done to death by torture (not that he would care much for that), and the knowledge that, thanks to him, the Cassio he so wretchedly loathed and scorned is Governor of Cyprus. For all his vocabulary and for all his brains, his contempt for elementary human law is ever too strong for him. He makes the best of circumstances that he can; he wins his points; he is always alert, maleficent, superior to his opportunity; and in the long run he is found to be merely the peer of the Hogarthian Thomas Idle.

## V

But, to make a play, it is not enough to present Intelligence at odds with Morals. For, as was long since pointed out to me by my dear friend Fleeming Jenkin, the staple of Drama is Emotion. "You must have Incident," he argued, in his fine, logical way, "or your Emotion will not be Strong; you must have Character, or it will not be Interesting; you must have Style, or your presentation of it, whatever it be, will not be Literature." But, if you lacked all these (the contention was) you might stagger through, and grip your audience, and achieve your end, if only you had Emotion. Dumas *père*, though Jenkin knew it not, had said the same thing years before. There was an essential difference, he remarked, between himself and Hugo, "le Penseur" (so the loyal old Artist called the greatest Liar in all Drama), and the difference consisted in this: Hugo could do nothing in the play-writing way without what one may call the fripperies of drama — Horns of Hernani, Tombs of Charlemagne, "Soupers à Ferrare," Choruses of Monks, Coffins, Thunder and Lightning, Ruined Castles, and the like; whereas all *he* wanted was "four trestles, four boards, two actors, and a passion." 'T is the briefest, the most comprehensive, the most luminous statement of the essentials of drama that ever, I believe, was made; and it fits the "Othello" of Shakespeare as it fits the Æschylean "Oresteia," like a glove.

Scene by scene and act by act, the "Moor of Venice" moves with an irresistible stride to an inevitable end; 't is a lasting and affecting proof, if any proof were needed, that the "well-made play" did not begin with "Antony" and "la Tour de Nesle"; it shows that the Sardou formula and the Ibsen formula are mere matters of to-day, and that here at least is a point at which the Sophocles of the "Œdipus" might take hands with Shakespeare, and own that, his own masterpiece, all radiant and serene as it appears, is no greater nor more splendid an achievement in design, in construction, in effect, than this. This is another way of saying that, Iago apart, the interest of "Othello" is entirely and unalterably emotional. You might play it in a barn, and it would still fulfil itself; for the singular reason that here, wherever you look, are old Dumas' "two actors and a passion," and that what Jenkin called "emotion" is never absent. The actors change: are now Othello and Iago, now Desdemona and Emilia, now Othello and Desdemona, now Emilia and Othello, now Othello and Fate, the tremendous, the inevitable: even Death. But the passion persists: it shifts its quality as the Master wills, takes on the hues, speaks with the voice, dares with the furiousness of love, and hate, and jealousy, and misery and murder and despair. But, once evoked, it never lets go of your throat; and this is what makes "Othello" the play of plays it is. I think that "Lear" is bigger, as being more elemental (let us say); I think that "Hamlet" is certainly more subtle, more engaging, more romantic; I think that in "Measure for Measure" and "Macbeth": perhaps, too, in "Troilus," and in "Antony and Cleopatra," with its elderly lovers kissing and dying against a background of ruining Empire and a changing world: we get more of such vital and undisguisable essentials as went to the making of our Prospero-Proteus, our Man of Men, our Chief of Poets. But nowhere in his achievement has he discovered a greater capacity, a clearer insight, a more assured and royal method, than here. Of course, he plundered Cinthio; but who was Cinthio that he should not be plundered? And of what effect were Cinthio now — he, and his Antient, and his Lieutenant, his "Moore," and his Desdemona — had he not been translated, and glorified, and eternised in terms of very Shakespeare?

## VI

Tragedy is an abstraction of life at its quintessential points: its passages of high-climbing, inoubliable, annihilating rapture; its supreme moments of envy, hate, wrath, misery, suspicion, lust, despair. And Shakespeare, the great "Abstractor of Quintessences," accomplished no more splendidly difficult task in all the years of his tremendous and triumphing achievement than when he made his Moor, not merely plausible, but entirely human and credible. It has been, and perhaps still is, objected to this august and immortal thing, that Othello is too "easily moved": that his ear is too wide, that is, his mind too prompt, his heart too eager to entertain suspicion; and that he is so readily satisfied in the matter of proof that he might give points to such typical exemplars of horndom as Arnolphe in "l'École des femmes" and the Sganarelle of "le Cocu imaginaire." These objections have, of course, been traversed, and traversed to so complete a purpose that I note them only for the form's sake, and with never a thought of going back on them. 'T is enough to note that Tragedy, being a quintessentialised abstraction of life in its most desperate potentialities, has its own convention, and is governed by none but its own rules, and that to begin upon the examination of an exemplary piece of tragedy by questioning the propriety of that convention were to make Criticism impossible. To accept the Tragic Convention is to find the character of Othello an "entire and perfect chrysolite" among creations: an achievement in presentation which Shakespeare himself has not surpassed; a study in passion-wrought character in which the last is said. 'Tis as it were a soul in earthquake and eclipse; and there is never a detail, never a touch of the cataclysm, however variable and minute, but is realised and recorded with so consummate an artistry, an intelligence so abounding, so complete, and so assured, that the issue savours of inspiration.

## VII

It is history that J.-B. Poquelin, called Molière, wrote for his company, and that, cutting his parts to his actors and actresses much as a modern snip cuts you his "tailor-mades" and his "suits" to the physical idiosyncrasies of his customers, female and male, succeeded, being an accomplished and very admirable master in this sort of sartorials, not only in fitting his customers but, also, in founding and establishing a tradition: a tradition, too, of such comprehensive and enduring potency that, in its shadow, Coquelin *aîné* plays Scapin much as Molière played Scapin, while Agnès (say) and Horace are to this day presented in the same terms, on the same level, so far as is possible in the same spirit, as were imposed by J.-B. Poquelin on le Sieur Lagrange and on that brilliant and beautiful Mlle. de Brie, of whom 't is told that, at sixty, she was still the best Agnès of them all. Now, Molière was the greatest Actor-Manager[1] that ever lived; but it is obvious that Shakespeare, being a person of (shall I say?) considerable intelligence, anticipated him in this matter, and, having a great actor, Burbage to wit, in his company, wrote as carefully and as joyously for him as, long years after, le Sieur Poquelin wrote for Molière and Lagrange and de Brie. I would go so far as to say that had Dick Burbage — a Stratford man, too! — been of another temperament than he was, and lacked the strange, romantic, passionate face he had, there had been differences in Richard, Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, Othello, as we have them, and that they who would fain present the dramatist from his plays would do well to look carefully and keenly into the intellectual and emotional quality of his chief of actors. But such argument is not for here nor now; and I end with this reflection: "This afternoon, at the Globe Theatre, First Performance of 'Othello, the Moore of Venice'; Othello, Master Richard Burbadge." *Othello?* with Burbage "up," and Shakespeare prompting him from the wings? What a *première!*

W. E. HENLEY.

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[1] That he wrote his best for himself and his temporary woman, or "leading lady," is but to say that he was a Manager-Actor in the fullest sense of the term.

# OTHELLO

# DRAMATIS PERSONÆ[1]

Duke of Venice.
Brabantio, a senator.
Other Senators.
Gratiano, brother to Brabantio.
Lodovico, kinsman to Brabantio.
Othello, a noble Moor in the service of the Venetian state.
Cassio, his lieutenant.
Iago, his ancient.
Roderigo, a Venetian gentleman.
Montano, Othello's predecessor in the government of Cyprus.
Clown, servant to Othello.

Desdemona, daughter to Brabantio and wife to Othello.
Emilia, wife to Iago.
Bianca, mistress to Cassio.

Sailor, Messenger, Herald, Officers, Gentlemen, Musicians, and Attendants.

Scene: *Venice: a seaport in Cyprus*

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[1] This piece was first printed in 1622 in a quarto volume which was reissued i 1630. A better and fuller text appeared in the First Folio of 1623. Acts and Scene are indicated in the First Folio, and a list of "The Names of the Actors" is put a the end. The First Quarto has no such list, and the only notes of scenic subdivision there are prefixed to Acts II, IV, and V, which are introduced respectively with th words *Actus 2*, *Scæna 1*, *Actus 4*, and *Actus 5*.

## ACT FIRST — SCENE I — VENICE

### *A STREET*

*Enter* Roderigo *and* Iago

**Roderigo**

TUSH, NEVER TELL ME; I take it much unkindly
That thou, Iago, who hast had my purse
As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this.

**Iago.** 'Sblood, but you will not hear me:
If ever I did dream of such a matter,
Abhor me.

**Rod.** Thou told'st me thou didst hold him in thy hate.

**Iago.** Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones of the city,
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,

---

1 *Tush, never tell me*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios omit *Tush.* Roderigo is impatiently rebuking Iago's protestations, that he was ignorant of Roderigo's love for Desdemona. The dialogue, which is

Off-capp'd to him: and, by the faith of man,
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place:
But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,
Evades them, with a bombast circumstance
Horribly stuff'd with epithets of war;
And, in conclusion,
Nonsuits my mediators; for, "Certes," says he,
"I have already chose my officer."
And what was he?
Forsooth, a great arithmetician,
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,
A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife;

---

under weigh before the scene opens, deals with the first news of Othello's elopement with Desdemona, which Iago has just communicated to Roderigo.

3 *know of this*] know, without revealing to the speaker, the understanding between Othello and Desdemona.

10 *Off-capp'd to*] Stood cap in hand soliciting.

13 *with a bombast circumstance*] with inflated circumlocution.

16 "*Certes*"] Certainly, assuredly.

19–20 *arithmetician . . . Florentine*] one only fit for dealing with figures on paper, a man suited to the vocation of a city clerk, able to add and subtract. Cassio as a Florentine might be credited with quickness at figures and bookkeeping, a characteristic of the Florentines' traditional absorption in commerce. Cf. line 31, *infra*. Arithmetical faculty might, too, be well ascribed to a soldier who had only learnt the art of war in books of strategy, which commonly abounded in statistical tables. Cf. line 24, *infra*, "bookish theoric."

21 *A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife*] Thus the early editions. The reading is difficult, and many changes have been suggested, but none are quite convincing. Cassio is a bachelor; but at Act IV, Sc. i, Iago banters him with the report that he is intending to marry the courtesan Bianca. Iago may imply sneeringly here that Cassio is on the point of

That never set a squadron in the field,
Nor the division of a battle knows
More than a spinster; unless the bookish theoric,
Wherein the toged consuls can propose
As masterly as he: mere prattle without practice
Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had the election:
And I, of whom his eyes had seen the proof
At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds
Christian and heathen, must be be-lee'd and calm'd
By debitor and creditor: this counter-caster,
He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,
And I — God bless the mark! — his Moorship's ancient.

---

coming to grief, of challenging damnation by making the beautiful prostitute his wife. Iago has a cynical suspicion of his own wife's fidelity (see I, iii, 381–382; II, i, 289–293; IV, ii, 148, *infra*), and is inclined to regard damnation as the common fate of all husbands of beautiful women.

23 *the division of a battle*] the disposition of a battalion.

24 *theoric*] theory. Cf. *All 's Well*, IV, iii, 135: "*theoric* of war."

25 *toged*] Thus the First Quarto. All other early editions read less pointedly *tongued*, *i. e.*, garrulous, talkative. *Toged* means wearing the "toga," the uniform of civil officers of state as opposed to military officers. "Consuls" merely means councillors or senators, as in I, ii, 43, *infra*.
*propose*] talk.

30 *be-lee'd*] under the lee of another, out of the way of the wind, and so becalmed (as of a ship).

31 *By debitor and creditor*] By a mere bookkeeper, and ready-reckoner.
*counter-caster*] one who casts up counters; an old method of accountancy. Cf. line 19, *supra*, "arithmetician."

32 *in good time*] used ironically like the French "à la bonne heure," *i. e.*, "forsooth," "good luck."

33 *God bless the mark!*] God avert the omen!
*ancient*] a colloquial mispronunciation of "ensign."

ROD. By heaven, I rather would have been his hangman.

IAGO. Why, there 's no remedy; 't is the curse of service,
Preferment goes by letter and affection,
And not by old gradation, where each second
Stood heir to the first. Now, sir, be judge yourself
Whether I in any just term am affined
To love the Moor.

ROD. I would not follow him then.

IAGO. O, sir, content you;
I follow him to serve my turn upon him:
We cannot all be masters, nor all masters
Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark
Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,
That doting on his own obsequious bondage
Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,
For nought but provender, and when he 's old, cashier'd:
Whip me such honest knaves. Others there are
Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves,
And throwing but shows of service on their lords
Do well thrive by them, and when they have lined their coats
Do themselves homage: these fellows have some soul,
And such a one do I profess myself.

---

36 *by letter and affection*] by commendatory testimonial and favouritism.

39 *I . . . affined*] I am bound in any such close terms of affinity or kinship as.

49 *honest knaves*] honest fellows.

50 *trimm'd . . . visages*] decked out in the outward forms and semblances.

For, sir,
It is as sure as you are Roderigo,
Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago:
In following him, I follow but myself;
Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,
But seeming so, for my peculiar end:
For when my outward action doth demonstrate
The native act and figure of my heart
In compliment extern, 't is not long after
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
For daws to peck at: I am not what I am.
  ROD. What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe,
If he can carry 't thus!
  IAGO. Call up her father,
Rouse him: make after him, poison his delight,
Proclaim him in the streets; incense her kinsmen,
And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,
Plague him with flies: though that his joy be joy,

---

58 *I would not be Iago*] Either "I should not be my servile self," or preferably "there would be no need for me to play this malicious rôle."

64 *In compliment extern*] In external etiquette or behaviour; Rowe's correction of the original reading *complement* [*i. e.*, accomplishment] *extern.*

65 *I will wear . . . upon my sleeve*] Men of fashion wore their mistresses' favours or tokens pinned to their sleeve.

66 *I am not what I am*] I am concealing my true character, I am not what I seem to others to be.

67–68 *What . . . carry 't thus*] What a fulness of luck does the nigger enjoy or possess, if he can succeed in a matter of this sort. "Thick-lips," which were dominant features of negroes, was an expression only applicable by way of abuse to a smooth-lipped Moor.

72 *Plague him with flies*] The speaker has in mind the noisome activity of insect pests in barren sandy regions.

Yet throw such changes of vexation on 't
As it may lose some colour.
Rod. Here is her father's house; I'll call aloud.
Iago. Do; with like timorous accent and dire yell
As when, by night and negligence, the fire
Is spied in populous cities.
Rod. What, ho, Brabantio! Signior Brabantio, ho!
Iago. Awake! what, ho, Brabantio! thieves! thieves!
thieves!
Look to your house, your daughter and your bags!
Thieves! thieves!

Brabantio *appears above, at a window*

Bra. What is the reason of this terrible summons?
What is the matter there?
Rod. Signior, is all your family within?
Iago. Are your doors lock'd?
Bra. Why, wherefore ask you this?
Iago. 'Zounds, sir, you're robb'd; for shame, put on
your gown;
Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul;
Even now, now, very now, an old black ram
Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise;
Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,
Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you:
Arise, I say.

---

73 *changes*] alternations. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *chances*, *i. e.*, damaging accidents.

77 *by night and negligence*] at night and through negligence, or as a result of carelessness.

BRA. What, have you lost your wits?
ROD. Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?
BRA. Not I: what are you?
ROD. My name is Roderigo.
BRA. The worser welcome:
I have charged thee not to haunt about my doors:
In honest plainness thou hast heard me say
My daughter is not for thee; and now, in madness,
Being full of supper and distempering draughts,
Upon malicious bravery, dost thou come
To start my quiet.
ROD. Sir, sir, sir, —
BRA. But thou must needs be sure
My spirit and my place have in them power
To make this bitter to thee.
ROD. Patience, good sir.
BRA. What tell'st thou me of robbing? this is Venice;
My house is not a grange.
ROD. Most grave Brabantio,
In simple and pure soul I come to you.
IAGO. 'Zounds, sir, you are one of those that will not serve God, if the devil bid you. Because we come to do you service and you think we are ruffians, you'll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse; you'll

---

100 *distempering draughts*] intoxicating liquors.
101 *Upon malicious bravery*] Out of malicious bravado and bluster. Thus the Quartos.
107 *a grange*] a secluded farm-house in the open country.
108 *In simple and pure soul*] With absolute honesty of purpose.

have your nephews neigh to you; you'll have coursers for cousins, and gennets for germans.

BRA. What profane wretch art thou?

IAGO. I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs.

BRA. Thou art a villain.

IAGO. You are — a senator.

BRA. This thou shalt answer; I know thee, Roderigo.

ROD. Sir, I will answer any thing. But, I beseech
you,
If 't be your pleasure and most wise consent,
As partly I find it is, that your fair daughter,
At this odd-even and dull watch o' the night,
Transported with no worse nor better guard
But with a knave of common hire, a gondolier,
To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor, —
If this be known to you, and your allowance,
We then have done you bold and saucy wrongs;
But if you know not this, my manners tell me
We have your wrong rebuke. Do not believe

---

113 *nephews*] grandsons.

114 *gennets for germans*] (small Spanish) horses for kinsmen.

115 *profane*] blasphemous.

124 *At this odd-even . . . o' the night*] At the midmost period of the night, between 12 P. M. and 1 A. M., when night, as in *Macb.*, III, iv, 127, is "at odds with morning."

125 *Transported*] Has been or was transported. The verb in the sentence is incomplete.

128 *and your allowance*] and (has) your approval.

131 *We have your wrong rebuke*] You rebuke us unjustly.

That, from the sense of all civility,
I thus would play and trifle with your reverence:
Your daughter, if you have not given her leave,
I say again, hath made a gross revolt,
Tying her duty, beauty, wit and fortunes,
In an extravagant and wheeling stranger
Of here and every where. Straight satisfy yourself:
If she be in her chamber or your house,
Let loose on me the justice of the state
For thus deluding you.
  **Bra.** Strike on the tinder, ho!
Give me a taper! call up all my people!
This accident is not unlike my dream:
Belief of it oppresses me already.
Light, I say! light! [*Exit above.*
  **Iago.** Farewell; for I must leave you:
It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place,
To be produced — as, if I stay, I shall —
Against the Moor: for I do know, the state,
However this may gall him with some check,
Cannot with safety cast him; for he's embark'd
With such loud reason to the Cyprus wars,
Which even now stand in act, that, for their souls,
Another of his fathom they have none

---

132 *from the sense*] contrary to the intention.

137–138 *In an extravagant . . . every where*] To a vagabond and roving foreigner belonging to this and every country.

149 *check*] rebuke.

150 *cast*] dismiss, reject. Cf. V, ii, 330, *infra.*

153 *fathom*] capacity.

To lead their business: in which regard,
Though I do hate him as I do hell pains,
Yet for necessity of present life,
I must show out a flag and sign of love,
Which is indeed but sign. That you shall surely find him,
Lead to the Sagittary the raised search;
And there will I be with him. So farewell. [*Exit.*

*Enter, below,* Brabantio, *in his night-gown, and* Servants *with torches*

Bra. It is too true an evil: gone she is;
And what's to come of my despised time
Is nought but bitterness. Now, Roderigo,
Where didst thou see her? O unhappy girl!
With the Moor, say'st thou? Who would be a father!
How didst thou know 't was she? O, she deceives me
Past thought! What said she to you? Get more tapers.
Raise all my kindred. Are they married, think you?
Rod. Truly, I think they are.

---

154 *in which regard*] on which account.

159 *the Sagittary*] probably intended for the name of a well-known inn, which bore as its sign a picture of the Archer of the Zodiac. The "Centaur" is similarly mentioned in *Com. of Errors*, I, ii, 9 *et passim*, and "the Pegasus" in *T. of Shrew*, IV, iv, 5. There seems no ground for the suggestion frequently made by commentators on this line that the arsenal of Venice was called by this name.
*the raised search*] the hue and cry.

162 *my despised time*] According to Johnson "time of no value." The notion seems to be that for the rest of Brabantio's life he will be an object of contempt.

**Bra.** O heaven! How got she out? O treason of the blood!
Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds
By what you see them act. Is there not charms
By which the property of youth and maidhood
May be abused? Have you not read, Roderigo,
Of some such thing?

**Rod.** Yes, sir, I have indeed.

**Bra.** Call up my brother. O, would you had had her!
Some one way, some another. Do you know
Where we may apprehend her and the Moor?

**Rod.** I think I can discover him, if you please
To get good guard and go along with me.

**Bra.** Pray you, lead on. At every house I'll call;
I may command at most. Get weapons, ho!
And raise some special officers of night.
On, good Roderigo; I'll deserve your pains. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II—ANOTHER STREET

*Enter* Othello, Iago, *and* Attendants *with torches*

**Iago.** Though in the trade of war I have slain men,
Yet do I hold it very stuff o' the conscience

---

173 *the property of*] the innocence appertaining to.

174 *abused*] deceived, deluded.

182 *I may command at most*] My word is law at most houses.

183 *of night*] Thus the First Quarto. All other early editions read *of might.*

2 *very stuff*] essence.

To do no contrived murder: I lack iniquity
Sometimes to do me service: nine or ten times
I had thought to have yerk'd him here under the ribs.
OTH. 'T is better as it is.
IAGO. Nay, but he prated
And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms
Against your honour,
That, with the little godliness I have,
I did full hard forbear him. But I pray you, sir,
Are you fast married? Be assured of this,
That the magnifico is much beloved,
And hath in his effect a voice potential
As double as the duke's: he will divorce you,
Or put upon you what restraint and grievance
The law, with all his might to enforce it on,
Will give him cable.
OTH. Let him do his spite:
My services, which I have done the signiory,
Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'T is yet to know —
Which, when I know that boasting is an honour,

---

5 *yerk'd him*] given him (*i. e.*, Roderigo) a smart stab. Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *jerk'd*.

10 *forbear him*] let him alone.

12 *the magnifico*] the grandee Brabantio. "Magnifico" was a term specifically applied to a Venetian magnate.

13–14 *a voice potential . . . duke's*] a voice of powerful influence quite as extensive as the duke's. "Double" often means "exceptionally strong," as "single" often means "exceptionally weak."

17 *cable*] full means or opportunity.

I shall promulgate — I fetch my life and being
From men of royal siege, and my demerits
May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune
As this that I have reach'd: for know, Iago,
But that I love the gentle Desdemona,
I would not my unhoused free condition
Put into circumscription and confine
For the sea's worth. But, look! what lights come
yond?

IAGO. Those are the raised father and his friends:
You were best go in.

OTH. Not I; I must be found:
My parts, my title and my perfect soul,
Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they?

IAGO. By Janus, I think no.

---

22 *siege*] rank. "Siege" often means "seat" or "throne."
*demerits*] "deserts," "merits," as in the classical Latin "demereo."

23 *unbonneted*] This must mean "with the cap off," "without any concealment." Othello points out that his merits may openly and undisguisedly address on even terms (or rank with) a station in life as eminent as that to which his marriage conducts him. The suggestion of obeisance which often attaches to "unbonneted" does not belong to the word here.

26 *unhoused*] undomesticated, without household cares.

27 *circumscription and confine*] circumscribed limits.

28 *the sea's worth*] Cf. *Sonnet* xxi, 6, "sea's rich gems."

29 *raised*] summoned. Cf. I, i, 159, *supra*, "the *raised* search," and I, i, 183, "*raise* some special officers."

31 *My parts . . . my perfect soul*] My endowments or gifts . . . my spotless conscience.

33 *By Janus*] Iago appropriately swears by the double-faced god.

*Enter* Cassio, *and certain* Officers *with torches*

Oth. The servants of the duke, and my lieutenant.
The goodness of the night upon you, friends!
What is the news?
Cas. The duke does greet you, general,
And he requires your haste-post-haste appearance,
Even on the instant.
Oth. What is the matter, think you?
Cas. Something from Cyprus, as I may divine:
It is a business of some heat: the galleys
Have sent a dozen sequent messengers
This very night at one another's heels;
And many of the consuls, raised and met,
Are at the duke's already: you have been hotly call'd for;
When, being not at your lodging to be found,
The senate hath sent about three several quests
To search you out.
Oth. 'T is well I am found by you.
I will but spend a word here in the house,
And go with you. [*Exit.*
Cas. Ancient, what makes he here?
Iago. Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land carack:
If it prove lawful prize, he's made for ever.

---

35 *The goodness . . . upon you*] Good night to you!
41 *sequent*] following one another, one after the other.
43 *consuls*] councillors. Cf. I, i, 25, *supra*, "toged *consuls*."
46 *about*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *above*.
*quests*] search parties.
50 *a land carack*] a ship of great burden on land.

**CAS.** I do not understand.
**IAGO.** He's married.
**CAS.** To who?

*Re-enter* OTHELLO

**IAGO.** Marry, to — Come, captain, will you go?
**OTH.** Have with you.
**CAS.** Here comes another troop to seek for you.
**IAGO.** It is Brabantio: general, be advised;
He comes to bad intent.

*Enter* BRABANTIO, RODERIGO, *and* Officers *with torches and weapons*

**OTH.** Holla! stand there!
**ROD.** Signior, it is the Moor.
**BRA.** Down with him, thief!
[*They draw on both sides.*
**IAGO.** You, Roderigo! come, sir, I am for you.
**OTH.** Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.
Good signior, you shall more command with years
Than with your weapons.
**BRA.** O thou foul thief, where hast thou stow'd my daughter?

---

52 *To who?*] Cassio's ignorance is affected. Cf. III, iii, 97, where Othello asserts that Cassio knew his relations with Desdemona "from first to last."

53 *Have with you*] I am quite ready.

55 *be advised*] be careful.

Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her;
For I'll refer me to all things of sense,
If she in chains of magic were not bound,
Whether a maid so tender, fair and happy,
So opposite to marriage that she shunn'd
The wealthy curled darlings of our nation,
Would ever have, to incur a general mock,
Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom
Of such a thing as thou, to fear, not to delight.
Judge me the world, if 't is not gross in sense
That thou hast practised on her with foul charms,
Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals
That weaken motion: I'll have't disputed on;
'T is probable, and palpable to thinking.
I therefore apprehend and do attach thee
For an abuser of the world, a practiser
Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.

---

65 *If . . . bound*] The First Quarto omits this line.

68 *curled darlings*] pretty fops, who were wont to curl their hair. Cf. *Ant. and Cleop.*, V, ii, 299, "the *curled* Antony."

70 *guardage*] guardianship.

71 *a thing . . . to fear, not to delight*] a thing . . . to cause fear, not to give delight.

72–77 *Judge . . . thee*] The First Quarto omits this passage.

72 *Judge . . . gross in sense*] Let the world judge for me, if it is not obvious to any understanding. Cf. 76, *infra*, "palpable to thinking."

75 *weaken motion*] impair the faculties. Hanmer needlessly suggested *waken motion*, *i. e.*, waken the sensual impulse, although "motion" often has the latter sense. Cf. I, iii, 95, *infra*.

77 *attach*] arrest.

78 *an abuser of the world*] a proclaimed cheat.

79 *inhibited . . . warrant*] prohibited and unauthorised.

Lay hold upon him: if he do resist,
Subdue him at his peril.
  OTH. Hold your hands,
Both you of my inclining and the rest:
Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it
Without a prompter. Where will you that I go
To answer this your charge?
  BRA. To prison, till fit time
Of law and course of direct session
Call thee to answer.
  OTH. What if I do obey?
How may the duke be therewith satisfied,
Whose messengers are here about my side,
Upon some present business of the state
To bring me to him?
  FIRST OFF. 'T is true, most worthy signior;
The duke's in council, and your noble self,
I am sure, is sent for.
  BRA. How! the duke in council!
In this time of the night! Bring him away:
Mine's not an idle cause: the duke himself,
Or any of my brothers of the state,
Cannot but feel this wrong as 't were their own;
For if such actions may have passage free,
Bond-slaves and pagans shall our statesmen be. [*Exeunt.*

---

82 *of my inclining*] of those inclined to side with me.
86 *course of direct session*] regular process of judicial procedure.
99 *pagans*] lawless savages.

## SCENE III — A COUNCIL-CHAMBER

*The* Duke *and* Senators *sitting at a table;* Officers *attending*

DUKE. There is no composition in these news
That gives them credit.
FIRST SEN. Indeed they are disproportion'd;
My letters say a hundred and seven galleys.
DUKE. And mine, a hundred and forty.
SEC. SEN. And mine, two hundred:
But though they jump not on a just account, —
As in these cases, where the aim reports,
'T is oft with difference, — yet do they all confirm
A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.
DUKE. Nay, it is possible enough to judgement:
I do not so secure me in the error,
But the main article I do approve
In fearful sense.
SAILOR. [*Within*] What, ho! what, ho! what, ho!
FIRST OFF. A messenger from the galleys.

---

1 *composition*] consistency, coherence.

5 *jump not . . . account*] agree not in an exact estimate.

6 *the aim reports*] guess or conjecture brings the news.

8 *A Turkish fleet . . . Cyprus*] Cyprus was under the dominion of the Venetian republic from 1489 till 1571, when it was captured by the Turkish fleet.

10–12 *I do not so secure . . . fearful sense*] I do not attach so much importance to the discrepancy as not to admit the substantial accuracy of the intelligence in its sense of giving ground for alarm.

*Enter* Sailor

DUKE. Now, what's the business?
SAIL. The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes;
So was I bid report here to the state
By Signior Angelo.
DUKE. How say you by this change?
FIRST SEN. This cannot be,
By no assay of reason: 't is a pageant
To keep us in false gaze. When we consider
The importancy of Cyprus to the Turk,
And let ourselves again but understand
That as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes,
So may he with more facile question bear it,
For that it stands not in such warlike brace,
But altogether lacks the abilities
That Rhodes is dress'd in: if we make thought of this,
We must not think the Turk is so unskilful
To leave that latest which concerns him first,
Neglecting an attempt of ease and gain,
To wake and wage a danger profitless.
DUKE. Nay, in all confidence, he's not for Rhodes.
FIRST OFF. Here is more news.

---

14 *preparation*] force ready for action. Cf. line 221, *infra.*
17 *How . . . change?*] What do you make of this change?
18 *assay*] test.
23 *with more facile question bear it*] with less opposition contest it.
24-30 *For that . . . profitless*] The First Quarto omits this passage.
24 *brace*] state of defence.
30 *wake and wage*] excite and challenge.

*Enter a* Messenger

Mess. The Ottomites, reverend and gracious,
Steering with due course toward the isle of Rhodes,
Have there injointed them with an after fleet.
First Sen. Ay, so I thought. How many, as you guess?
Mess. Of thirty sail: and now they do re-stem
Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance
Their purposes toward Cyprus. Signior Montano,
Your trusty and most valiant servitor,
With his free duty recommends you thus,
And prays you to believe him.
Duke. 'T is certain then for Cyprus.
Marcus Luccicos, is not he in town?
First Sen. He's now in Florence.
Duke. Write from us to him; post-post-haste dispatch.
First Sen. Here comes Brabantio and the valiant Moor.

*Enter* Brabantio, Othello, Iago, Roderigo, *and* Officers

Duke. Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you
Against the general enemy Ottoman.
[*To Brabantio*] I did not see you; welcome, gentle signior;
We lack'd your counsel and your help to-night.

---

33 *The Ottomites*] The Ottomans, the Turks.

35 *injointed them*] joined their forces, combined.

36 *Ay, so I . . . guess?*] The First Quarto omits this line.

44 *Marcus Luccicos*] apparently a prominent Greek of Cyprus, who was known to be visiting Italy. He is mentioned nowhere else.

46 *to him*] The First Quarto reads *wish him, i. e.*, desire him to come.

BRA. So did I yours. Good your grace, pardon me;
Neither my place nor aught I heard of business
Hath raised me from my bed, nor doth the general care
Take hold on me; for my particular grief
Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature
That it engluts and swallows other sorrows,
And it is still itself.
DUKE. Why, what's the matter?
BRA. My daughter! O, my daughter!
ALL. Dead?
BRA. Ay, to me;
She is abused, stol'n from me and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks;
For nature so preposterously to err,
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
Sans witchcraft could not.
DUKE. Whoe'er he be that in this foul proceeding
Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself
And you of her, the bloody book of law
You shall yourself read in the bitter letter
After your own sense, yea, though our proper son
Stood in your action.
BRA. Humbly I thank your grace.
Here is the man, this Moor; whom now, it seems,

---

56 *flood-gate*] like a torrent rushing through a sluice.

67–69 *the bloody . . . sense*] the stringent statute appointing condign punishment shall be applied to the letter, in accord with your own interpretation.

69–70 *though . . . action*] though our own son should be defendant in your action.

Your special mandate for the state-affairs
Hath hither brought.
  **All.** We are very sorry for 't.
  **Duke.** [*To Othello*] What in your own part can you say to this?
  **Bra.** Nothing, but this is so.
  **Oth.** Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
My very noble and approved good masters,
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter
It is most true; true, I have married her:
The very head and front of my offending
Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,
And little blest with the soft phrase of peace;
For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,
Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used
Their dearest action in the tented field;
And little of this great world can I speak,
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle;
And therefore little shall I grace my cause
In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious patience,
I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver
Of my whole course of love; what drugs, what charms,
What conjuration and what mighty magic —
For such proceeding I am charged withal —
I won his daughter.
  **Bra.** A maiden never bold;

---

77 *approved good masters*] tried patrons.

84 *some nine moons wasted*] save for nine months, wasted in unemployment.

85 *dearest*] chief, most important.

90 *round*] plain, direct.

Of spirit so still and quiet that her motion
Blush'd at herself; and she — in spite of nature,
Of years, of country, credit, every thing —
To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on!
It is a judgement maim'd and most imperfect,
That will confess perfection so could err
Against all rules of nature; and must be driven
To find out practices of cunning hell,
Why this should be. I therefore vouch again,
That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,
Or with some dram conjured to this effect,
He wrought upon her.
  DUKE. To vouch this, is no proof,
Without more certain and more overt test
Than these thin habits and poor likelihoods
Of modern seeming do prefer against him.
  FIRST SEN. But, Othello, speak:
Did you by indirect and forced courses
Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?
Or came it by request, and such fair question
As soul to soul affordeth?
  OTH. I do beseech you,
Send for the lady to the Sagittary,

---

95–96 *her motion . . . herself*] any sensual impulse of her spirit caused blushing. "Motion" is thus used elsewhere. Cf. note on I, ii, 75, *supra*. "Her," "herself" both refer to Desdemona's spirit. The "spirit" or "soul" is usually reckoned feminine.

108–109 *thin habits . . . modern seeming*] superficial semblances and insubstantial conjectures of trivial appearance. "Modern" is frequently used by Shakespeare for trivial or commonplace. Cf. *As you like it*, II, vii, 156: "wise saws and *modern* instances."

And let her speak of me before her father:
If you do find me foul in her report,
The trust, the office I do hold of you,
Not only take away, but let your sentence
Even fall upon my life.
DUKE. Fetch Desdemona hither.
OTH. Ancient, conduct them; you best know the place.
[*Exeunt Iago and Attendants.*
And till she come, as truly as to heaven
I do confess the vices of my blood,
So justly to your grave ears I'll present
How I did thrive in this fair lady's love
And she in mine.
DUKE. Say it, Othello.
OTH. Her father loved me, oft invited me,
Still question'd me the story of my life
From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes,
That I have pass'd.
I ran it through, even from my boyish days
To the very moment that he bade me tell it:
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field,
Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,
Of being taken by the insolent foe,
And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence,
And portance in my travels' history:

---

139 *portance . . . history*] Thus substantially the Second Quarto. The First Quarto has the variation *with it all my* for *portance in my*, while the Folios substitute *Travellers* for *travels'*. "Portance" means deportment, carriage.

Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven,
It was my hint to speak, — such was the process;
And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders. This to hear
Would Desdemona seriously incline:
But still the house-affairs would draw her thence;
Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,
She'ld come again, and with a greedy ear
Devour up my discourse: which I observing,
Took once a pliant hour, and found good means
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
But not intentively: I did consent,
And often did beguile her of her tears
When I did speak of some distressful stroke
That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,

---

140 *antres*] caves or caverns; a French word, not found elsewhere.

144–145 *men whose heads . . . shoulders*] Cf. Raleigh's *Discoverie of Guiana*, 1596, where a nation of people whose "heades appeare not above their shoulders" is allotted by Raleigh to a region of South America on hearsay evidence, which he is inclined to credit.

146 *incline*] *sc.* her ear.

151 *a pliant hour*] a suitable hour.

153 *dilate*] relate in full.

154 *by parcels*] in parts, partially.

155 *intentively*] with full attention, intently. Thus the Quartos. The First Folio reads less satisfactorily *instinctively* and the later Folios *distinctively*.

She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:
She swore, in faith, 't was strange, 't was passing strange;
'T was pitiful, 't was wondrous pitiful:
She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd
That heaven had made her such a man: she thank'd me,
And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story,
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake:
She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,
And I loved her that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have used.
Here comes the lady; let her witness it.

*Enter* DESDEMONA, IAGO, *and* Attendants

DUKE. I think this tale would win my daughter too.
Good Brabantio,
Take up this mangled matter at the best:
Men do their broken weapons rather use
Than their bare hands.
BRA. I pray you, hear her speak:
If she confess that she was half the wooer,
Destruction on my head, if my bad blame
Light on the man! Come hither, gentle mistress:
Do you perceive in all this noble company
Where most you owe obedience?
DES. My noble father,
I do perceive here a divided duty:
To you I am bound for life and education;

---

159 *sighs*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read unsatisfactorily *kisses*.
173 *Take up . . . at the best*] Make the best of this ugly tortured business.

My life and education both do learn me
How to respect you; you are the lord of duty,
I am hitherto your daughter: but here's my husband,
And so much duty as my mother show'd
To you, preferring you before her father,
So much I challenge that I may profess
Due to the Moor my lord.
  Bra. God be with you! I have done.
Please it your grace, on to the state-affairs:
I had rather to adopt a child than get it.
Come hither, Moor:
I here do give thee that with all my heart,
Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart
I would keep from thee. For your sake, jewel,
I am glad at soul I have no other child;
For thy escape would teach me tyranny,
To hang clogs on them. I have done, my lord.
  Duke. Let me speak like yourself, and lay a sentence
Which, as a grise or step, may help these lovers
Into your favour.
When remedies are past, the griefs are ended
By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.

---

183 *learn*] teach.
191 *get*] beget.
197 *escape*] escapade.
199 *Let me speak like yourself*] Let me speak as it would become you to speak (of *un fait accompli*).
200 *grise*] step; from the old French *greis*, plural of *gré*, a step.
202 *When remedies . . . ended*] Cf. *L. L. L.*, V, ii, 28: "past cure is still past care." See also *Wint. Tale*, III, ii, 219–220, and *Macb.*, III, ii, 11–12.

To mourn a mischief that is past and gone
Is the next way to draw new mischief on.
What cannot be preserved when fortune takes,
Patience her injury a mockery makes.
The robb'd that smiles steals something from the thief;
He robs himself that spends a bootless grief.
  BRA. So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile;
We lose it not so long as we can smile.
He bears the sentence well, that nothing bears
But the free comfort which from thence he hears;
But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow,
That, to pay grief, must of poor patience borrow.
These sentences, to sugar or to gall,
Being strong on both sides, are equivocal:
But words are words; I never yet did hear
That the bruised heart was pierced through the ear.
I humbly beseech you, proceed to the affairs of state.

DUKE. The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus. Othello, the fortitude of the place is best known to you; and though we have there a sub-

---

207 *Patience her injury a mockery makes*] Patience ridicules the loss.

213 *the free comfort . . . hears*] The moral precepts of consolation which are liberally bestowed when sentences are pronounced in a court of law. In line 216, *infra*, "sentences" is used in the different sense of "maxims" or "proverbs."

215 *to pay grief*] to satisfy the call of grief.

216–217 *These sentences . . . equivocal*] These maxims have equivocal force, have ambiguous significance, and equally well tend to sweetness or bitterness, tend to console or exasperate.

219 *pierced*] penetrated, reached, touched. Cf. *L. L. L.*, V, ii, 740: "Honest plain words best *pierce the ear* of grief."

221 *preparation*] force ready for action. Cf. line 14, *supra*.

stitute of most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion, a sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you: you must therefore be content to slubber the gloss of your new fortunes with this more stubborn and boisterous expedition.

OTH. The tyrant custom, most grave senators,
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war
My thrice-driven bed of down: I do agnize
A natural and prompt alacrity
I find in hardness; and do undertake
These present wars against the Ottomites.
Most humbly therefore bending to your state,
I crave fit disposition for my wife,
Due reference of place and exhibition,
With such accommodation and besort
As levels with her breeding.

DUKE. If you please,
Be 't at her father's.

BRA. I'll not have it so.

OTH. Nor I.

DES. Nor I, I would not there reside,

---

224–225 *opinion . . . effects*] public opinion, which exerts effective sovereignty.

226 *slubber the gloss*] sully or blur the brightness.

231 *thrice-driven bed of down*] bed of softest and lightest feathers. A driving fan was applied to feathers in order to separate the light from the heavy.

*agnize*] confess, acknowledge.

235 *bending to your state*] making obeisance to your throne.

237 *Due reference . . . exhibition*] Due allotment of residence and maintenance or allowance.

238 *besort*] companionship, retinue; not found elsewhere as a substantive.

To put my father in impatient thoughts
By being in his eye. Most gracious duke,
To my unfolding lend your prosperous ear,
And let me find a charter in your voice
To assist my simpleness.
  Duke. What would you, Desdemona?
  Des. That I did love the Moor to live with him,
My downright violence and storm of fortunes
May trumpet to the world: my heart's subdued
Even to the very quality of my lord:
I saw Othello's visage in his mind,
And to his honours and his valiant parts
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.
So that, dear lords, if I be left behind,
A moth of peace, and he go to the war,
The rites for which I love him are bereft me,
And I a heavy interim shall support
By his dear absence. Let me go with him.
  Oth. Let her have your voices.

---

244 *your prosperous ear*] your propitious, favourable ear. Thus the Folios. The Quartos read more simply *a gracious ear.*

245 *charter*] legal protection.

249 *My downright violence and storm of fortunes*] My unbridled impetuosity and tempestuous challenge of the common course of fortune. Thus the Folios. The First Quarto reads *scorne of Fortunes* for *storm of fortunes.*

251 *the very quality*] the whole nature, character, and virtue; "quality" has a wider significance here than its common sense of "profession." Thus the Folios. The First Quarto reads *the utmost pleasure.*

252 *I saw . . . mind*] I found Othello's true character, not in his black complexion, but in his mental endowments.

256 *A moth*] An idle parasite.

Vouch with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not,
To please the palate of my appetite;
Nor to comply with heat — the young affects
In me defunct — and proper satisfaction;
But to be free and bounteous to her mind:
And heaven defend your good souls, that you think
I will your serious and great business scant
For she is with me. No, when light-wing'd toys
Of feather'd Cupid seel with wanton dulness
My speculative and officed instruments,
That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
Let housewives make a skillet of my helm,
And all indign and base adversities
Make head against my estimation!

---

263 *the young affects*] the affections or passions of youth.

264 *In me defunct*] Capell's correction of the original unintelligible reading *In my defunct*. The punctuation of this and the former line is also due to Capell. For the general sense cf. Fletcher's *Fair Maid of the Inn*, Act I, Sc. i: "our cold fathers In whom long since *their youthful heats were dead.*" Othello (III, iii, 269–270, *infra*) thinks to explain Desdemona's alleged infidelity: "for I am declined Into the vale of years, — yet that's not much."

*proper*] personal, selfish, self-indulgent.

266 *defend . . . that you think*] forbid you from thinking.

269 *seel*] close or sew up the eyes. A method employed in taming hawks. Cf. III, iii, 214, *infra*.

270 *My speculative and officed instruments*] My faculties of thought or vision and of activity in the discharge of duty.

271 *my disports*] my indulgences in pleasure.

272 *skillet*] kettle or saucepan.

273 *indign and base adversities*] unworthy and disgraceful accusations of enmity.

274 *estimation*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *reputation*.

**Duke.** Be it as you shall privately determine,
Either for her stay or going: the affair cries haste,
And speed must answer 't; you must hence to-night.
**Des.** To-night, my lord?
**Duke.** This night.
**Oth.** With all my heart.
**Duke.** At nine i' the morning here we'll meet again.
Othello, leave some officer behind,
And he shall our commission bring to you;
With such things else of quality and respect
As doth import you.
**Oth.** So please your grace, my ancient;
A man he is of honesty and trust:
To his conveyance I assign my wife,
With what else needful your good grace shall think
To be sent after me.
**Duke.** Let it be so.
Good night to every one. [*To Brab.*] And, noble signior,
If virtue no delighted beauty lack,
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.
**First Sen.** Adieu, brave Moor; use Desdemona well.
**Bra.** Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see:
She has deceived her father, and may thee.
[*Exeunt Duke, Senators, Officers, &c.*

---

283 *import*] concern.

289 *If virtue no delighted beauty lack*] If virtue consist in attractions capable of giving delight. "Delighted" here means "delightful," capable of causing delight. Cf. *Cymb.*, V, iv, 101, 102: "my gift The more delay'd *delighted.*"

293 *She has deceived . . . and may thee*] An ironical anticipation of the fate attending the union of Desdemona and Othello.

Oth. My life upon her faith! Honest Iago,
My Desdemona must I leave to thee:
I prithee, let thy wife attend on her;
And bring them after in the best advantage.
Come, Desdemona; I have but an hour
Of love, of worldly matters and direction,
To spend with thee: we must obey the time.
[*Exeunt Othello and Desdemona.*

Rod. Iago!

Iago. What say'st thou, noble heart?

Rod. What will I do, thinkest thou?

Iago. Why, go to bed and sleep.

Rod. I will incontinently drown myself.

Iago. If thou dost, I shall never love thee after. Why, thou silly gentleman!

Rod. It is silliness to live when to live is torment; and then have we a prescription to die when death is our physician.

Iago. O villanous! I have looked upon the world for four times seven years; and since I could distinguish betwixt a benefit and an injury, I never found man that knew how to love himself. Ere I would say I would drown myself for the love of a guinea-hen, I would change my humanity with a baboon.

Rod. What should I do? I confess it is my shame to be so fond; but it is not in my virtue to amend it.

---

297 *in the best advantage*] at the first or most favourable opportunity.

305 *incontinently*] straightway, immediately.

312 *four times seven years*] Iago here claimed to be no more than twenty-eight years old.

315 *guinea-hen*] a word occasionally used as a slang term for "courtesan."

IAGO. Virtue! a fig! 't is in ourselves that we are thus or thus. Our bodies are gardens; to the which our wills are gardeners: so that if we will plant nettles or sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed up thyme, supply it with one gender of herbs or distract it with many, either to have it sterile with idleness or manured with industry, why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions: but we have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts; whereof I take this, that you call love, to be a sect or scion.

ROD. It cannot be.

IAGO. It is merely a lust of the blood and a permission of the will. Come, be a man: drown thyself! drown cats and blind puppies. I have professed me thy friend, and I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable toughness: I could never better stead thee

---

320 *gardens*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read less satisfactorily *our Gardens.*

323 *gender*] species.

324 *manured*] cultivated, or tilled. Cf. Milton, *Par. Lost,* XI, 28: "his own hand *manuring.*"

325 *corrigible*] corrective, or correcting.

326 *balance*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read, quite unintelligibly, *the brain.*

331 *a sect or scion*] a cutting or graft.

336 *thy deserving*] thy merits, deserts.

337 *better stead*] better serve.

than now. Put money in thy purse; follow thou the wars; defeat thy favour with an usurped beard; I say, put money in thy purse. It cannot be that Desdemona should long continue her love to the Moor — put money in thy purse — nor he his to her: it was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration; put but money in thy purse. These Moors are changeable in their wills: — fill thy purse with money. The food that to him now is as luscious as locusts, shall be to him shortly as bitter as coloquintida. She must change for youth: when she is sated with his body, she will find the error of her choice: she must have change, she must: therefore put money in thy purse. If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drowning. Make all the money thou canst: if sanctimony and a frail vow betwixt an erring barbarian and a supersubtle Venetian be not too hard for my wits and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her; therefore make money. A pox of drowning thyself! it is clean out of the way: seek thou rather to be hanged in compassing thy joy than to be drowned and go without her.

---

339 *defeat thy favour*] disfigure or disguise thy countenance.

343 *an answerable sequestration*] a corresponding separation, breach, or parting.

346 *locusts*] According to Gerard's *Herbal*, the fruit or bean of the carob (Siliqua dulcis) tree, found both in South Italy and Palestine, was of a juicy sweetness, and was "of some called St. John's bread, and thought to be that which is translated 'locusts' whereon St. John did feed when he was in the wilderness."

347 *coloquintida*] more familiarly known as "colocynth," made from "bitter" apples, a familiar ingredient in pills.

353 *erring*] vagabond.

ROD. Wilt thou be fast to my hopes, if I depend on the issue?

IAGO. Thou art sure of me: go, make money: I have told thee often, and I re-tell thee again and again, I hate the Moor: my cause is hearted; thine hath no less reason. Let us be conjunctive in our revenge against him: if thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, me a sport. There are many events in the womb of time, which will be delivered. Traverse; go; provide thy money. We will have more of this to-morrow. Adieu.

ROD. Where shall we meet i' the morning?

IAGO. At my lodging.

ROD. I'll be with thee betimes.

IAGO. Go to; farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo?

ROD. What say you?

IAGO. No more of drowning, do you hear?

ROD. I am changed: I'll go sell all my land. [*Exit.*

IAGO. Thus do I ever make my fool my purse;
For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,
If I would time expend with such a snipe
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor;
And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets
He has done my office: I know not if 't be true;
But I for mere suspicion in that kind

---

363 *hearted*] fixed in my heart.

367 *Traverse*] March; a military word of command.

379 *snipe*] "Woodcock" is also frequent in the sense of simpleton.

381–382 *And it is thought . . . my office*] See note on I, i, 21, *supra*, and II, i, 289–293, and IV, ii, 148, *infra*.

Will do as if for surety. He holds me well;
The better shall my purpose work on him.
Cassio's a proper man: let me see now;
To get his place, and to plume up my will
In double knavery — How, how? — Let's see: —
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear
That he is too familiar with his wife.
He hath a person and a smooth dispose
To be suspected; framed to make women false.
The Moor is of a free and open nature,
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so;
And will as tenderly be led by the nose
As asses are.
I have't. It is engender'd. Hell and night
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.
[*Exit.*

---

384 *Will . . . surety*] Will act as if I were certain of it.
*He holds me well*] He thinks well of me.
386 *a proper man*] a handsome fellow.
387 *plume up my will*] exalt, glorify my ambition.
391 *a smooth dispose*] a smooth or gentle disposition or manner.

## ACT SECOND — SCENE I — A SEA-PORT IN CYPRUS

### *AN OPEN PLACE NEAR THE QUAY*

*Enter* MONTANO *and two* Gentlemen

MONTANO

WHAT FROM THE CAPE can you discern at sea?
FIRST GENT. Nothing at all: it is a high-wrought flood;
I cannot, 'twixt the heaven and the main,
Descry a sail.
MON. Methinks the wind hath spoke aloud at land;
A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements:
If it hath ruffian'd so upon the sea,
What ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them,
Can hold the mortise? What shall we hear of this?

---

7 *ruffian'd*] blustered.

9 *hold the mortise*] keep the dovetailed beams in place.

SEC. GENT. A segregation of the Turkish fleet:
For do but stand upon the foaming shore,
The chidden billow seems to pelt the clouds;
The wind-shaked surge, with high and monstrous mane,
Seems to cast water on the burning bear,
And quench the guards of the ever-fixed pole:
I never did like molestation view
On the enchafed flood.
MON. If that the Turkish fleet
Be not enshelter'd and embay'd, they are drown'd;
It is impossible to bear it out.

*Enter a third* Gentleman

THIRD GENT. News, lads! our wars are done.
The desperate tempest hath so bang'd the Turks,
That their designment halts: a noble ship of Venice
Hath seen a grievous wreck and sufferance
On most part of their fleet.
MON. How! is this true?

13 *The wind-shaked surge . . . mane*] The foaming white tops of the breakers are likened to the "manes" of horses, the breakers being known in popular parlance as "sea-horses."

14 *the burning bear*] the shining constellation of the Great Bear, the "ursa major" in the northern sky.

15 *the guards of the ever-fixed pole*] the stars near the pole star. In contemporary treatises of navigation "the guards" is a term specifically bestowed on the two stars "$\beta$ and $\gamma$ ursae minoris," which are usually depicted on the shoulder and foreleg of the Little Bear.

23 *wreck*] The old reading *wrack*, *i. e.*, ruin, would be better retained here.

THIRD GENT. The ship is here put in,
A Veronesa; Michael Cassio,
Lieutenant to the warlike Moor Othello,
Is come on shore: the Moor himself at sea,
And is in full commission here for Cyprus.
MON. I am glad on't; 't is a worthy governor.
THIRD GENT. But this same Cassio, though he speak of comfort
Touching the Turkish loss, yet he looks sadly
And prays the Moor be safe; for they were parted
With foul and violent tempest.
MON. Pray heavens he be;
For I have served him, and the man commands
Like a full soldier. Let's to the seaside, ho!
As well to see the vessel that's come in
As to throw out our eyes for brave Othello,
Even till we make the main and the aerial blue
An indistinct regard.
THIRD GENT. Come, let's do so;
For every minute is expectancy
Of more arrivance.

*Enter* CASSIO

CAS. Thanks, you the valiant of this warlike isle,
That so approve the Moor! O, let the heavens

---

26 *A Veronesa*] Doubtless a ship equipped at the expense of the Veronese for the Venetian service. Verona was a dependency of Venice.

36 *full*] finished, perfect.

39–40 *Even till . . . regard*] As far as the distant horizon, where the blue of the sea and the blue of the sky merge into one indivisible line of vision.

Give him defence against the elements,
For I have lost him on a dangerous sea.
  MON. Is he well shipp'd?
  CAS. His bark is stoutly timber'd, and his pilot
Of very expert and approved allowance;
Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,
Stand in bold cure. [*A cry within:* "A sail, a sail, a sail!"

*Enter a fourth* Gentleman

  CAS. What noise?
  FOURTH GENT. The town is empty; on the brow o' the sea
Stand ranks of people, and they cry "A sail!"
  CAS. My hopes do shape him for the governor.
[*Guns heard.*
  SEC. GENT. They do discharge their shot of courtesy:
Our friends at least.
  CAS. I pray you, sir, go forth,
And give us truth who 't is that is arrived.
  SEC. GENT. I shall. [*Exit.*
  MON. But, good lieutenant, is your general wived?
  CAS. Most fortunately: he hath achieved a maid
That paragons description and wild fame;
One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,

---

49 *Of very expert and approved allowance*] With a reputation for great skill and experience.

50 *not surfeited to death*] not quite sick unto death.

51 *Stand in bold cure*] Are confident of remedy, are assured that all may yet be well.

53 *brow o' the sea*] edge, margin of the shore.

63 *excels . . . pens*] outmatches all the happy turns of pens devoted to panegyric.

And in the essential vesture of creation
Does tire the ingener.

*Re-enter second* Gentleman

How now! who has put in?
SEC. GENT. 'T is one Iago, ancient to the general.
CAS. He has had most favourable and happy speed:
Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,
The gutter'd rocks, and congregated sands,
Traitors ensteep'd to clog the guiltless keel,
As having sense of beauty, do omit
Their mortal natures, letting go safely by
The divine Desdemona.
MON. What is she?
CAS. She that I spake of, our great captain's captain,
Left in the conduct of the bold Iago;
Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts
A se'nnight's speed. Great Jove, Othello guard,

---

64–65 *And in the essential . . . ingener*] And in those essential or supreme qualities of beauty, which are possible in created beings [she] wearies out or defeats the powers of the pictorial artist. "Ingener" is used in the sense of "designer" or "author." Cf. Gabriel Harvey's *Pierce's Supererogation* (1592), p. 8: "*ingener* of phrases."

65 *tire the ingener*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read tamely *bear an excellency*.

*put in*] *sc.* to port.

69 *gutter'd rocks*] rocks with channels or gutters cut about them by the sea's action.

70 *ensteep'd*] steeped in water, submerged. Thus the Folios. The First Quarto reads *enscerped, i. e.,* enscarped.

71–72 *omit . . . natures*] forgo their deadly characteristics. "Mortal" means destructive, death dealing.

77 *a se'nnight's speed*] a week's space.

And swell his sail with thine own powerful breath,
That he may bless this bay with his tall ship,
Make love's quick pants in Desdemona's arms,
Give renew'd fire to our extincted spirits,
And bring all Cyprus comfort.

*Enter* DESDEMONA, EMILIA, IAGO, RODERIGO, *and* Attendants

O, behold,
The riches of the ship is come on shore!
Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees.
Hail to thee, lady! and the grace of heaven,
Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
Enwheel thee round!
DES. I thank you, valiant Cassio.
What tidings can you tell me of my lord?
CAS. He is not yet arrived: nor know I aught
But that he's well and will be shortly here.
DES. O, but I fear — How lost you company?
CAS. The great contention of the sea and skies
Parted our fellowship — But, hark! a sail.
[*A cry within:* "A sail, a sail!" *Guns heard.*
SEC. GENT. They give their greeting to the citadel:
This likewise is a friend.
CAS. See for the news. [*Exit Gentleman.*
Good ancient, you are welcome. [*To Emilia*] Welcome, mistress:

---

81 *extincted*] extinguished, quenched.

82 *And bring . . . comfort*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios omit the line.

83 *riches*] used in the singular like the French *richesse*, *i. e.*, wealth. Cf. III, iii, 177, *infra*.

Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,
That I extend my manners; 't is my breeding
That gives me this bold show of courtesy. [*Kissing her.*
IAGO. Sir, would she give you so much of her lips
As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,
You'ld have enough.
DES. Alas, she has no speech.
IAGO. In faith, too much;
I find it still when I have list to sleep:
Marry, before your ladyship, I grant,
She puts her tongue a little in her heart
And chides with thinking.
EMIL. You have little cause to say so.
IAGO. Come on, come on; you are pictures out of doors,
Bells in your parlours, wild-cats in your kitchens,
Saints in your injuries, devils being offended,
Players in your housewifery, and housewives in your beds.
DES. O, fie upon thee, slanderer!
IAGO. Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk:
You rise to play, and go to bed to work.
EMIL. You shall not write my praise.
IAGO. No, let me not.

---

104 *have list*] have inclination.
109 *pictures*] beautiful painted objects.
110 *Bells*] Sounding cymbals.
111 *Saints in your injuries*] Assume the meek air of saints when you are bent on injuring others.
112 *housewives*] hussies, with an implication of wantonness.

Des. What wouldst thou write of me, if thou shouldst praise me?
Iago. O gentle lady, do not put me to't;
For I am nothing if not critical.
Des. Come on, assay — There's one gone to the harbour?
Iago. Ay, madam.
Des. I am not merry; but I do beguile
The thing I am by seeming otherwise.
Come, how wouldst thou praise me?
Iago. I am about it; but indeed my invention
Comes from my pate as birdlime does from frize;
It plucks out brains and all: but my Muse labours,
And thus she is deliver'd.
If she be fair and wise, fairness and wit,
The one's for use, the other useth it.
Des. Well praised! How if she be black and witty?
Iago. If she be black, and thereto have a wit,
She'll find a white that shall her blackness fit.
Des. Worse and worse.
Emil. How if fair and foolish?
Iago. She never yet was foolish that was fair;
For even her folly help'd her to an heir.
Des. These are old fond paradoxes to make fools

---

119 *critical*] censorious. Similarly "critic" commonly means "censor."

126 *frize*] rough woollen cloth to which birdlime naturally sticks fast.

130 *the other useth it*] her wit enables her to employ her beauty to the best advantage.

133 *white*] a quibble on "white" and "wight," a fellow. Cf. line 157, *infra*.

138 *fond*] silly.

laugh i' the alehouse. What miserable praise hast thou for her that 's foul and foolish?

Iago. There's none so foul, and foolish thereunto,
But does foul pranks which fair and wise ones do.

Des. O heavy ignorance! thou praisest the worst best. But what praise couldst thou bestow on a deserving woman indeed, one that in the authority of her merit did justly put on the vouch of very malice itself?

Iago. She that was ever fair and never proud,
Had tongue at will and yet was never loud,
Never lack'd gold and yet went never gay,
Fled from her wish and yet said "Now I may;"
She that, being anger'd, her revenge being nigh,
Bade her wrong stay and her displeasure fly;
She that in wisdom never was so frail
To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail;
She that could think and ne'er disclose her mind,
See suitors following and not look behind;
She was a wight, if ever such wight were, —

---

141 *foul*] ugly.

145–146 *one that . . . malice itself*] one that was so conscious of her own merit and of the authority it gave her that she could justly call on malice itself to vouch for her virtuous character.

148 *Had tongue at will*] Had free command of speech.

154 *change . . . tail*] give up delicate fare in exchange for coarse fare. The cod's head was held to be delicate eating, while the salmon's tail was thought not to be worth serving up at table. An ambiguous reference has been suggested here to Desdemona's preference for a coarse suitor like Othello to one of greater refinement, such as Roderigo. In that case Iago doubtless had in mind that a cod's head meant a fool as well as an edible delicacy.

156 *See . . . behind*] This line is omitted from the First Quarto.

DES. To do what?

IAGO. To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.

DES. O most lame and impotent conclusion! Do not learn of him, Emilia, though he be thy husband. How say you, Cassio? is he not a most profane and liberal counsellor?

CAS. He speaks home, madam: you may relish him more in the soldier than in the scholar.

IAGO. [*Aside*] He takes her by the palm: ay, well said, whisper: with as little a web as this will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do; I will gyve thee in thine own courtship. You say true; 't is so, indeed: if such tricks as these strip you out of your lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kissed your three fingers so oft, which now again you are most apt to play the sir in. Very good; well kissed! an excellent courtesy! 't is so, indeed. Yet again your fingers to your lips? would they were clyster-pipes for your sake!— [*Trumpet within.*] The Moor! I know his trumpet.

CAS. 'T is truly so.

DES. Let's meet him and receive him.

CAS. Lo, where he comes!

---

159 *chronicle small beer*] keep account of small household expenses.

162 *profane and liberal*] blasphemous and licentious.

169 *gyve . . . courtship*] fetter, entrap thee in thine own acts of courtesy. Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *catch you in your own courtesies.*

171–172 *kissed your three fingers*] made the gesture of politeness, which was in vogue in high society.

173 *play the sir*] show your good breeding and gallantry.

173–174 *well kissed! . . . courtesy*] Probably Cassio has just saluted Desdemona by kissing his hand.

*Enter* OTHELLO *and* Attendants

OTH. O my fair warrior!
DES. My dear Othello!
OTH. It gives me wonder great as my content
To see you here before me. O my soul's joy!
If after every tempest come such calms,
May the winds blow till they have waken'd death!
And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas
Olympus-high, and duck again as low
As hell's from heaven! If it were now to die,
'T were now to be most happy; for I fear,
My soul hath her content so absolute
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.
DES. The heavens forbid
But that our loves and comforts should increase,
Even as our days do grow!
OTH. Amen to that, sweet powers!
I cannot speak enough of this content;
It stops me here; it is too much of joy:
And this, and this, the greatest discords be [*Kissing her.*
That e'er our hearts shall make!
IAGO. [*Aside*] O, you are well tuned now!

---

180 *my fair warrior*] a conventional apostrophe of amorous sonneteers of the day. Cf. Spenser's *Amoretti*, lvii, 1: "*Sweet warrior.*" It is derived from Petrarch's "dolce guerrera," which is constantly imitated by the French poets. Cf. De Baif's "belle ennemi" and Desportes' "douce adversaire." The phrase is also found in *Pandora* (London, 1584), an adaptation of Ronsard's verse by John Southern or Soothern.

But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,
As honest as I am.
Oth. Come, let us to the castle.
News, friends; our wars are done, the Turks are drown'd.
How does my old acquaintance of this isle?
Honey, you shall be well desired in Cyprus;
I have found great love amongst them. O my sweet,
I prattle out of fashion, and I dote
In mine own comforts. I prithee, good Iago,
Go to the bay, and disembark my coffers:
Bring thou the master to the citadel;
He is a good one, and his worthiness
Does challenge much respect. Come, Desdemona,
Once more well met at Cyprus.
[*Exeunt all but Iago and Roderigo.*

Iago. Do thou meet me presently at the harbour. Come hither. If thou be'st valiant — as, they say, base men being in love have then a nobility in their natures more than is native to them — list me. The lieutenant to-night watches on the court of guard. First, I must

---

198 *set down the pegs*] lower the pegs or pins (on which the wires were tightly stretched on well-tuned musical instruments). Iago means that he will turn this harmony to discord.

202 *well desired*] much solicited by hospitable invitations.

204 *out of fashion*] without method, aimlessly.
*dote*] talk stupidly.

207 *the master*] the sailing master of the ship, who held first place under the captain in large vessels.

212-214 *base men . . . native to them*] Cf. *Hamlet*, IV, v, 158: "*Nature is fine in love.*"

215 *on the court of guard*] on guard, on sentinel duty. The phrase "court

tell thee this: Desdemona is directly in love with him.

Rod. With him! why, 't is not possible.

Iago. Lay thy finger thus, and let thy soul be instructed. Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor, but for bragging and telling her fantastical lies: and will she love him still for prating? let not thy discreet heart think it. Her eye must be fed; and what delight shall she have to look on the devil? When the blood is made dull with the act of sport, there should be, again to inflame it and to give satiety a fresh appetite, loveliness in favour, sympathy in years, manners and beauties; all which the Moor is defective in: now, for want of these required conveniences, her delicate tenderness will find itself abused, begin to heave the gorge, disrelish and abhor the Moor; very nature will instruct her in it and compel her to some second choice. Now, sir, this granted — as it is a most pregnant and unforced position — who stands so eminently in the degree of this fortune as Cassio does? a knave very voluble; no further conscionable than in putting on the mere form of civil and humane seeming, for the better compassing

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of guard" is common. "Court" is commonly assumed to be a corruption of the French "corps."

218 *Lay thy finger thus*] Iago puts his finger to his lips, enjoining silence on Roderigo.

221 *and will she love him*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios have merely *To loue him.*

232 *pregnant and unforced*] most obvious and natural.

236 *civil and humane seeming*] courteous and polite demeanour.

236–237 *the better compassing . . . affection*] the better indulgence of his licentious and most secret wanton disposition.

of his salt and most hidden loose affection? why, none; why, none: a slipper and subtle knave; a finder out of occasions; that has an eye can stamp and counterfeit advantages, though true advantage never present itself: a devilish knave! Besides, the knave is handsome, young, and hath all those requisites in him that folly and green minds look after: a pestilent complete knave; and the woman hath found him already.

Rod. I cannot believe that in her; she's full of most blest condition.

Iago. Blest fig's-end! the wine she drinks is made of grapes: if she had been blest, she would never have loved the Moor: blest pudding! Didst thou not see her paddle with the palm of his hand? didst not mark that?

Rod. Yes, that I did; but that was but courtesy.

Iago. Lechery, by this hand; an index and obscure prologue to the history of lust and foul thoughts. They met so near with their lips that their breaths embraced together. Villanous thoughts, Roderigo! when these mutualities so marshal the way, hard at hand comes the master and main exercise, the incorporate conclusion: pish! But, sir, be you ruled by me: I have brought

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238 *slipper*] an old form of "slippery."

239 *stamp and counterfeit advantages*] coin and forge opportunities.

242 *green*] young, unripe.

244 *found him*] acknowledged his fascination.

246 *blest condition*] pious temperament.

252 *index*] The "index" was usually prefixed to books of the day and was applied generally to the prefatory matter.

256 *mutualities*] interchanges of familiarity.

257 *the incorporate conclusion*] cohabitation.

you from Venice. Watch you to-night; for the command, I'll lay 't upon you: Cassio knows you not: I'll not be far from you: do you find some occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud, or tainting his discipline, or from what other course you please, which the time shall more favourably minister.

ROD. Well.

IAGO. Sir, he is rash and very sudden in choler, and haply may strike at you: provoke him, that he may; for even out of that will I cause these of Cyprus to mutiny; whose qualification shall come into no true taste again but by the displanting of Cassio. So shall you have a shorter journey to your desires by the means I shall then have to prefer them, and the impediment most profitably removed, without the which there were no expectation of our prosperity.

ROD. I will do this, if I can bring it to any opportunity.

IAGO. I warrant thee. Meet me by and by at the citadel: I must fetch his necessaries ashore. Farewell.

ROD. Adieu. [*Exit.*

IAGO. That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it;

---

262 *tainting*] casting a slur on, discrediting.

266 *sudden in choler*] hasty in anger.

269–270 *whose qualification . . . again*] whose assuagement of anger, whose pacification shall never be without some unpleasant taste of bitterness. "Qualification" is a rare derivative from "qualify," which ordinarily meant "appease, assuage, allay." Cassio talks (II, iii, 36, *infra*) of a cup of wine being "qualified" (*i. e.*, allayed, diluted with water).

272 *prefer*] advance.

That she loves him, 't is apt and of great credit:
The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not,
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature;
And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona
A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too,
Not out of absolute lust, though peradventure
I stand accountant for as great a sin,
But partly led to diet my revenge,
For that I do suspect the lusty Moor
Hath leap'd into my seat: the thought whereof
Doth like a poisonous mineral gnaw my inwards;
And nothing can or shall content my soul
Till I am even'd with him, wife for wife;
Or failing so, yet that I put the Moor
At least into a jealousy so strong
That judgement cannot cure. Which thing to do,
If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trash

---

281 *apt . . . credit*] natural and most credible.

289–290 *I do suspect . . . seat*] See note on I, i, 21, and I, iii, 381–382, *supra*, and IV, ii, 148, *infra*.

291 *like a poisonous mineral gnaw*] like a poisonous mineral (which kills by corrosion).

297–298 *If this poor . . . putting on*] Thus Steevens, who substituted for *I crush* of the First Quarto, and *I trace* of the other early editions, the words *I trash*. The verb "trash" was a technical term of the kennel, and meant "to restrain by fastening a weight to the neck of an over-eager hound." Iago means that he will succeed if Roderigo, this poor insignificant Venetian ("trash of Venice"), whom he is checking because of his impetuosity in pursuit of his lady love, prove equal to the task of provoking the quarrel with Cassio. If the Folio *I trace* be retained, Iago may mean that he is dogging the steps of Roderigo in order to quicken his pace (in the pursuit of Desdemona), but there seem difficulties in this interpretation of "for his quick hunting."

For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,
I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip,
Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb;
For I fear Cassio with my night-cap too;
Make the Moor thank me, love me and reward me,
For making him egregiously an ass
And practising upon his peace and quiet
Even to madness. 'T is here, but yet confused:
Knavery's plain face is never seen till used. [*Exit.*

## SCENE II — A STREET

*Enter a* Herald *with a proclamation; People following*

Her. It is Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant general, that upon certain tidings now arrived, importing the mere perdition of the Turkish fleet, every man put himself into triumph; some to dance, some to make bonfires, each man to what sport and revels his addiction leads him: for, besides these beneficial news, it is the celebration of his nuptial. So much was his pleasure should be proclaimed. All offices are open, and there

---

300 *in the rank garb*] in his gross character, as warrants his coarseness. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *in the right garb.* "Rank" is frequently found in the sense of "lascivious," "wanton."

305 *'T is here*] Iago raises his hand to his head.

306 *Knavery's . . . used*] A knave can never clearly forecast his plans till the time for action arrives.

3 *mere perdition*] entire destruction.

5 *addiction*] inclination. Thus the Second Quarto, which the Folios misprint *addition.* The First Quarto reads *minde.*

8 *offices*] rooms in the castle where stores of food and drink were kept.

is full liberty of feasting from this present hour of five till the bell have told eleven. Heaven bless the isle of Cyprus and our noble general Othello! [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE III — A HALL IN THE CASTLE

*Enter* OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, CASSIO, *and* Attendants

OTH. Good Michael, look you to the guard to-night:
Let's teach ourselves that honourable stop,
Not to outsport discretion.
CAS. Iago hath direction what to do;
But notwithstanding with my personal eye
Will I look to 't.
OTH. Iago is most honest.
Michael, good night: to-morrow with your earliest
Let me have speech with you. Come, my dear love,
The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue;
That profit 's yet to come 'tween me and you.
Good night. [*Exeunt Othello, Desdemona, and Attendants.*

*Enter* IAGO

CAS. Welcome, Iago; we must to the watch.

IAGO. Not this hour, lieutenant; 't is not yet ten o' the clock. Our general cast us thus early for the love of his Desdemona; who let us not therefore blame: he hath not yet made wanton the night with her, and she is sport for Jove.

---

3 *to outsport discretion*] to neglect precautions by excessive indulgence in sport and revelry.

14 *cast us*] dismissed us.

Cas. She's a most exquisite lady.

Iago. And, I'll warrant her, full of game.

Cas. Indeed she's a most fresh and delicate creature.

Iago. What an eye she has! methinks it sounds a parley to provocation.

Cas. An inviting eye; and yet methinks right modest.

Iago. And when she speaks, is it not an alarum to love?

Cas. She is indeed perfection.

Iago. Well, happiness to their sheets! Come, lieutenant, I have a stoup of wine; and here without are a brace of Cyprus gallants that would fain have a measure to the health of black Othello.

Cas. Not to-night, good Iago: I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking: I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment.

Iago. O, they are our friends; but one cup: I'll drink for you.

Cas. I have drunk but one cup to-night, and that was craftily qualified too, and behold what innovation it makes here: I am unfortunate in the infirmity, and dare not task my weakness with any more.

Iago. What, man! 't is a night of revels: the gallants desire it.

Cas. Where are they?

Iago. Here at the door; I pray you, call them in.

Cas. I'll do 't; but it dislikes me. [*Exit.*

---

27 *a stoup*] A large tankard.

36 *craftily qualified*] slily allayed, diluted with water. See note on II, i, 269–270, *supra.*

IAGO. If I can fasten but one cup upon him,
With that which he hath drunk to-night already,
He'll be as full of quarrel and offence
As my young mistress' dog. Now my sick fool Roderigo,
Whom love hath turn'd almost the wrong side out,
To Desdemona hath to-night caroused
Potations pottle-deep; and he's to watch:
Three lads of Cyprus, noble swelling spirits,
That hold their honours in a wary distance,
The very elements of this warlike isle,
Have I to-night fluster'd with flowing cups,
And they watch too. Now, 'mongst this flock of drunkards,
Am I to put our Cassio in some action
That may offend the isle. But here they come:
If consequence do but approve my dream,
My boat sails freely, both with wind and stream.

*Re-enter* CASSIO; *with him* MONTANO *and* Gentlemen; *Servants following with wine*

CAS. 'Fore God, they have given me a rouse already.

MON. Good faith, a little one; not past a pint, as I am a soldier.

IAGO. Some wine, ho!

---

50 *pottle-deep*] a "pottle" was a measure of two quarts.

52 *That hold their honours . . . distance*] That treat their honour with the highest respect, are most sensitive on points of honour.

53 *The very elements . . . isle*] The very quintessence of the warlike people here.

58 *If consequence . . . approve*] If the result attest, prove true.

60 *a rouse*] a deep draught.

[*Sings*] And let me the canakin clink, clink;
And let me the canakin clink:
A soldier 's a man;
A life's but a span;
Why then let a soldier drink.

Some wine, boys!

CAS. 'Fore God, an excellent song.

IAGO. I learned it in England, where indeed they are most potent in potting: your Dane, your German, and your swag-bellied Hollander, — Drink, ho! — are nothing to your English.

CAS. Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking?

IAGO. Why, he drinks you with facility your Dane dead drunk; he sweats not to overthrow your Almain; he gives your Hollander a vomit ere the next pottle can be filled.

CAS. To the health of our general!

MON. I am for it, lieutenant, and I'll do you justice.

IAGO. O sweet England!

---

64–68 *And let me . . . a soldier drink*] A verse out of a popular drinking song of the day, although it has not been met with elsewhere in this precise form. Cf. Ravenscroft's *Pammelia* (1609), where a drinking song has the refrain: "Tap the cannikin, troll the cannikin, Toss the cannikin, turn the cannikin." "Canakin" or "cannikin" is, of course, a diminutive of "can."

72–74 *your Dane . . . your English*] For other references by Shakespeare to the drinking habits of these peoples, cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, I, ii, 76, *seq.* and *Hamlet*, I, iv, 17, *seq.*

75 *expert*] Thus the First Quarto. The other early editions read *exquisite.*

77 *Almain*] a common term for a German.

80 *I'll do you justice*] I'll drink as much as you. Cf. *2 Hen. IV*, V, iii, 71: "you have done me right."

[*Sings*] King Stephen was a worthy peer,
His breeches cost him but a crown;
He held them sixpence all too dear,
With that he call'd the tailor lown.

He was a wight of high renown,
And thou art but of low degree:
'T is pride that pulls the country down;
Then take thine auld cloak about thee.

Some wine, ho!

CAS. Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other.

IAGO. Will you hear 't again?

CAS. No; for I hold him to be unworthy of his place that does those things. Well: God 's above all; and there be souls must be saved, and there be souls must not be saved.

IAGO. It 's true, good lieutenant.

CAS. For mine own part — no offence to the general, nor any man of quality — I hope to be saved.

IAGO. And so do I too, lieutenant.

CAS. Ay, but, by your leave, not before me; the lieutenant is to be saved before the ancient. Let's have no more of this; let's to our affairs. God forgive us our

---

82-89 *King Stephen . . . cloak about thee*] A quotation from an old ballad called *Take thy old cloak about thee* which is given in full in Percy's *Reliques* (ed. 1876, Vol. I, pp. 195-198). Allusion is made to the lines concerning King Stephen in *The Tempest*, IV, i, 221-222.

95-96 *and there be souls must not be saved*] The Quartos omit this sentence.

sins! Gentlemen, let's look to our business. Do not think, gentlemen, I am drunk: this is my ancient: this is my right hand, and this is my left. I am not drunk now; I can stand well enough, and speak well enough.

All. Excellent well.

Cas. Why, very well then; you must not think then that I am drunk. [*Exit.*

Mon. To the platform, masters; come, let's set the watch.

Iago. You see this fellow that is gone before;
He is a soldier fit to stand by Cæsar
And give direction: and do but see his vice;
'T is to his virtue a just equinox,
The one as long as the other: 't is pity of him.
I fear the trust Othello puts him in
On some odd time of his infirmity
Will shake this island.

Mon. But is he often thus?

Iago. 'T is evermore the prologue to his sleep:
He'll watch the horologe a double set,
If drink rock not his cradle.

Mon. It were well
The general were put in mind of it.
Perhaps he sees it not, or his good nature
Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio
And looks not on his evils: is not this true?

---

111-112 *set the watch*] mount guard.

122 *He'll watch . . . a double set*] He'll keep awake while the clock goes round twice, through the whole twenty-four hours.

*Enter* RODERIGO

IAGO. [*Aside to him*] How now, Roderigo!
I pray you, after the lieutenant; go. [*Exit Roderigo.*

MON. And 't is great pity that the noble Moor
Should hazard such a place as his own second
With one of an ingraft infirmity:
It were an honest action to say
So to the Moor.

IAGO. Not I, for this fair island:
I do love Cassio well, and would do much
To cure him of this evil: — But, hark! what noise?
*A cry within:* "Help! help!"

*Re-enter* CASSIO, *driving in* RODERIGO

CAS. 'Zounds! you rogue! you rascal!

MON. What's the matter, lieutenant?

CAS. A knave teach me my duty! But I'll beat the knave into a wicker bottle.

ROD. Beat me!

CAS. Dost thou prate, rogue? [*Striking Roderigo.*

MON. Nay, good lieutenant; I pray you, sir, hold your hand.

CAS. Let me go, sir, or I'll knock you o'er the mazzard.

MON. Come, come, you're drunk.

CAS. Drunk! [*They fight.*

---

132 *ingraft*] inveterate, rooted.

140 *wicker bottle*] Thus the Quarto. The Folios read *Twiggen Bottle.* A flask covered with straw network is intended by either word.

Iago. [*Aside to Roderigo*] Away, I say; go out, and cry a mutiny. [*Exit Roderigo.*
Nay, good lieutenant! God's will, gentlemen!
Help, ho! — Lieutenant, — sir, — Montano, — sir; —
Help, masters! — Here's a goodly watch indeed!
[*A bell rings.*
Who's that that rings the bell? — Diablo, ho!
The town will rise: God's will, lieutenant, hold;
You will be shamed for ever.

*Re-enter* Othello *and* Attendants

Oth. What is the matter here?
Mon. 'Zounds, I bleed still; I am hurt to the death.
[*Faints.*
Oth. Hold, for your lives!
Iago. Hold, ho! Lieutenant, — sir, — Montano, — gentlemen, —
Have you forgot all sense of place and duty?
Hold! the general speaks to you; hold, hold, for shame!
Oth. Why, how now, ho! from whence ariseth this?
Are we turn'd Turks, and to ourselves do that
Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?

---

153 *Diablo*] A contraction of the Italian "Diabolo," *i. e.*, the devil.

156 *I am hurt to the death* [Faints] Thus the Second and Third Quartos. The First Quarto omits the stage direction. The First Folio adds *He dies* to the text of the line. Such words could not be a stage direction; for Montano does not die. If *He dies* be retained, it must be as a threat on Montano's part to pursue the fight till Cassio die. But it is simpler to omit the words.

163 *Ottomites*] The Turks had been drowned and thereby prevented from fighting on land.

For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl:
He that stirs next to carve for his own rage
Holds his soul light; he dies upon his motion.
Silence that dreadful bell: it frights the isle
From her propriety. What is the matter, masters?
Honest Iago, that look'st dead with grieving,
Speak, who began this? on thy love, I charge thee.
IAGO. I do not know: friends all but now, even now,
In quarter, and in terms like bride and groom
Devesting them for bed; and then, but now,
As if some planet had unwitted men,
Swords out, and tilting one at other's breast,
In opposition bloody. I cannot speak
Any beginning to this peevish odds;
And would in action glorious I had lost
Those legs that brought me to a part of it!
OTH. How comes it, Michael, you are thus forgot?
CAS. I pray you, pardon me; I cannot speak.
OTH. Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil;
The gravity and stillness of your youth
The world hath noted, and your name is great

---

164 *put by*] abate, end.

165 *carve for*] gratify, from the notion of causing pleasure by serving food. Thus all the early editions save the First Quarto, which feebly substitutes *carve forth*.

166 *upon his motion*] on his stirring, if he move.

168 *her propriety*] her natural quiet.

172 *In quarter*] In their quarters in the guard room.

177 *peevish odds*] foolish quarrel.

183 *stillness*] placidity.

In mouths of wisest censure: what's the matter,
That you unlace your reputation thus,
And spend your rich opinion for the name
Of a night-brawler? give me answer to it.
  MON. Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger:
Your officer, Iago, can inform you —
While I spare speech, which something now offends
        me —
Of all that I do know: nor know I aught
By me that's said or done amiss this night;
Unless self-charity be sometimes a vice,
And to defend ourselves it be a sin
When violence assails us.
  OTH.                Now, by heaven,
My blood begins my safer guides to rule,
And passion, having my best judgement collied,
Assays to lead the way: if I once stir,
Or do but lift this arm, the best of you
Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know
How this foul rout began, who set it on,
And he that is approved in this offence,
Though he had twinn'd with me, both at a birth,

---

185 *censure*] judgment.
186 *unlace*] undo, remove by unlacing, as of a garment.
187 *spend . . . opinion*] squander your good repute.
191 *something now offends me*] somewhat hurts me now.
194 *self-charity*] care of one's self.
197 *My blood*] My passionate feeling.
198 *collied*] blackened, darkened. Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, I, i, 145: "the *collied* night."
203 *approved in*] proved guilty of.

Shall lose me. What! in a town of war,
Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,
To manage private and domestic quarrel,
In night, and on the court and guard of safety!
'T is monstrous. Iago, who began't?
  Mon. If partially affined, or leagued in office,
Thou dost deliver more or less than truth,
Thou art no soldier.
  Iago. Touch me not so near:
I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth
Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio;
Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth
Shall nothing wrong him. Thus it is, general.
Montano and myself being in speech,
There comes a fellow crying out for help,
And Cassio following him with determined sword,
To execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman
Steps in to Cassio and entreats his pause:
Myself the crying fellow did pursue,
Lest by his clamour — as it so fell out —

---

205 *lose me*] forfeit my favour.

207 *manage*] handle, deal with.

208 *court and guard of safety*] a somewhat awkward variation of the common phrase "court of guard," which seems a corruption of "corps de garde." See note on II, i, 215, *supra*. "Of safety" has the force of an epithet implying that the guard exists in the interest of safety.

210–211 *If partially . . . truth*] If being connected by close ties or official relations, which make for partiality, thou art thereby led to give a partial account.

219 *with determined sword*] with drawn sword with which he was resolved to strike him.

The town might fall in fright: he, swift of foot,
Outran my purpose; and I return'd the rather
For that I heard the clink and fall of swords,
And Cassio high in oath; which till to-night
I ne'er might say before. When I came back —
For this was brief — I found them close together,
At blow and thrust; even as again they were
When you yourself did part them.
More of this matter cannot I report:
But men are men; the best sometimes forget:
Though Cassio did some little wrong to him,
As men in rage strike those that wish them best,
Yet surely Cassio, I believe, received
From him that fled some strange indignity,
Which patience could not pass.
Oth. I know, Iago,
Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,
Making it light to Cassio. Cassio, I love thee;
But never more be officer of mine.

*Re-enter* Desdemona, *attended*

Look, if my gentle love be not raised up!
I'll make thee an example.
Des. What's the matter?
Oth. All's well now, sweeting; come away to bed.
Sir, for your hurts, myself will be your surgeon:
[*To Montano, who is led off.*
Lead him off.
Iago, look with care about the town,

---

**224** *fall in fright*] fall into alarm, into panic.

And silence those whom this vile brawl distracted.
Come, Desdemona: 't is the soldiers' life
To have their balmy slumbers waked with strife.
*[Exeunt all but Iago and Cassio.*

IAGO. What, are you hurt, lieutenant?

CAS. Ay, past all surgery.

IAGO. Marry, heaven forbid!

CAS. Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial. My reputation, Iago, my reputation!

IAGO. As I am an honest man, I thought you had received some bodily wound; there is more sense in that than in reputation. Reputation is an idle and most false imposition; oft got without merit and lost without deserving: you have lost no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself such a loser. What, man! there are ways to recover the general again: you are but now cast in his mood, a punishment more in policy than in malice; even so as one would beat his offenceless dog to affright an imperious lion: sue to him again, and he's yours.

CAS. I will rather sue to be despised than to deceive

---

259 *sense*] sense of feeling, sensibility. Thus the Folios; the Quartos read *offence*. The meaning is of course that a wound in the body causes more pain than a wound to the reputation.

261 *imposition*] imposture or delusion.

265 *cast in his mood*] dismissed when he was in an angry mood.

266–267 *as one would beat . . . lion*] Cf. Cotgrave, *French-Engl. Dict.*, 1611: "Batre le chien devant le lyon, *To punish a meane man in the presence, and to the terror of, a great one.*"

so good a commander with so slight, so drunken, and so indiscreet an officer. Drunk? and speak parrot? and squabble? swagger? swear? and discourse fustian with one 's own shadow? O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil!

Iago. What was he that you followed with your sword? What had he done to you?

Cas. I know not.

Iago. Is 't possible?

Cas. I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly; a quarrel, but nothing wherefore. O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains! that we should, with joy, pleasance, revel and applause, transform ourselves into beasts!

Iago. Why, but you are now well enough: how came you thus recovered?

Cas. It hath pleased the devil drunkenness to give place to the devil wrath: one unperfectness shows me another, to make me frankly despise myself.

Iago. Come, you are too severe a moraler: as the time, the place, and the condition of this country stands, I could heartily wish this had not befallen; but since it is as it is, mend it for your own good.

Cas. I will ask him for my place again; he shall tell me I am a drunkard! Had I as many mouths as Hydra, such an answer would stop them all. To be

---

270–272 *Drunk? . . . shadow*] The First Quarto omits this passage.

270 *speak parrot?*] speak as senselessly as a parrot.

287 *unperfectness*] imperfection, defect.

now a sensible man, by and by a fool, and presently a beast! O strange! Every inordinate cup is unblest, and the ingredient is a devil.

Iago. Come, come, good wine is a good familiar creature, if it be well used: exclaim no more against it. And, good lieutenant, I think you think I love you.

Cas. I have well approved it, sir. I drunk!

Iago. You or any man living may be drunk at some time, man. I'll tell you what you shall do. Our general's wife is now the general. I may say so in this respect, for that he hath devoted and given up himself to the contemplation, mark and denotement of her parts and graces: confess yourself freely to her; importune her help to put you in your place again: she is of so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, she holds it a vice in her goodness not to do more than she is requested: this broken joint between you and her husband entreat her to splinter; and, my fortunes against any lay worth naming, this crack of your love shall grow stronger than it was before.

Cas. You advise me well.

Iago. I protest, in the sincerity of love and honest kindness.

Cas. I think it freely; and betimes in the morning I

---

307 *denotement*] close observation; Theobald's correction of the original reading *deuotement*, an obvious misprint. "Denotements" reappears in the First Quarto reading of III, iii, 127; see note there.

313 *splinter*] unite with splints; the common usage.
*any lay*] any bet or wager.

314 *grow stronger*] elliptical for "cause it to grow stronger."

319 *I think it freely*] I willingly believe it so.

will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me: I am desperate of my fortunes if they check me here.

Iago. You are in the right. Good night, lieutenant; I must to the watch.

Cas. Good night, honest Iago. [*Exit.*

Iago. And what's he then that says I play the villain?
When this advice is free I give and honest,
Probal to thinking, and indeed the course
To win the Moor again? For 't is most easy
The inclining Desdemona to subdue
In any honest suit. She's framed as fruitful
As the free elements. And then for her
To win the Moor, were't to renounce his baptism,
All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,
His soul is so enfetter'd to her love,
That she may make, unmake, do what she list,
Even as her appetite shall play the god
With his weak function. How am I then a villain
To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,
Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!
When devils will the blackest sins put on,

---

320 *undertake for me*] take up my cause.

326 *free*] gratis.

327 *Probal to thinking*] Plausible to the mind, reasonable to be thought of. "Probal" is a rare contraction of "Probable."

330 *fruitful*] bountiful, benign. Cf. III, iii, 7, *infra*: "*Bounteous* madam."

337 *his weak function*] his weak powers or character, his weak nature.

338 *this parallel course*] this course corresponding with the circumstances.

340 *put on*] incite, instigate.

They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
As I do now: for whiles this honest fool
Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes,
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
I'll pour this pestilence into his ear,
That she repeals him for her body's lust;
And by how much she strives to do him good,
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
So will I turn her virtue into pitch;
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all.

*Enter* RODERIGO

How now, Roderigo!

ROD. I do follow here in the chase, not like a hound that hunts, but one that fills up the cry. My money is almost spent; I have been to-night exceedingly well cudgelled; and I think the issue will be, I shall have so much experience for my pains; and so, with no money at all and a little more wit, return again to Venice.

IAGO. How poor are they that have not patience!
What wound did ever heal but by degrees?
Thou know'st we work by wit and not by witchcraft,
And wit depends on dilatory time.
Does 't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee,
And thou by that small hurt hast cashier'd Cassio:

---

341 *suggest*] tempt, prompt.

346 *repeals him*] recalls or repeats his name, talks about him again.

353 *the cry*] a common term for a pack of hounds. Roderigo here means he is a mere makeweight, a tool.

Though other things grow fair against the sun,
Yet fruits that blossom first will first be ripe:
Content thyself awhile. By the mass, 't is morning;
Pleasure and action make the hours seem short.
Retire thee; go where thou art billeted:
Away, I say; thou shalt know more hereafter:
Nay, get thee gone. [*Exit Rod.*] Two things are to be done:
My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress;
I'll set her on;
Myself the while to draw the Moor apart,
And bring him jump when he may Cassio find
Soliciting his wife: ay, that 's the way;
Dull not device by coldness and delay. [*Exit.*

364–365 *Though other things . . . be ripe*] Though other parts of our scheme are maturing promisingly, yet of necessity the part which happens to get the earliest opportunity of blossoming will come to fruition first, will prove the first success.

366 *By the mass*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *Introth*, *i. e.*, by my troth.

374 *jump*] just, at the very instant.

## ACT THIRD — SCENE I

### *BEFORE THE CASTLE*

*Enter* CASSIO *and some* Musicians

**CASSIO**

MASTERS, PLAY HERE; I will content your pains;
Something that's brief; and bid "Good morrow, general."
[*Music.*

*Enter* Clown

**CLO.** Why, masters, have your instruments been in Naples, that they speak i' the nose thus?

**FIRST MUS.** How, sir, how?

**CLO.** Are these, I pray you, wind-instruments?

**FIRST MUS.** Ay, marry, are they, sir.

**CLO.** O, thereby hangs a tail.

---

1 *play here*] It was a common custom to wake with music a bride and bridegroom on the morning after wedding ceremonies.

First Mus. Whereby hangs a tale, sir?

Clo. Marry, sir, by many a wind-instrument that I know. But, masters, here's money for you: and the general so likes your music, that he desires you, for love's sake, to make no more noise with it.

First Mus. Well, sir, we will not.

Clo. If you have any music that may not be heard, to 't again: but, as they say, to hear music the general does not greatly care.

First Mus. We have none such, sir.

Clo. Then put up your pipes in your bag, for I'll away: go; vanish into air; away! [*Exeunt Musicians.*

Cas. Dost thou hear, my honest friend?

Clo. No, I hear not your honest friend; I hear you.

Cas. Prithee, keep up thy quillets. There's a poor piece of gold for thee: if the gentlewoman that attends the general's wife be stirring, tell her there's one Cassio entreats her a little favour of speech: wilt thou do this?

Clo. She is stirring, sir: if she will stir hither, I shall seem to notify unto her.

Cas. Do, good my friend. [*Exit Clown.*

---

4 *Naples . . . nose*] Neapolitans have a drawling nasal twang, but there is possibly a reference to the disastrous effects on the nose wrought by the venereal disease, which was supposed to have originated in Naples.

12–13 *for love's sake*] Thus all the early editions, save the First Quarto which reads *of all loves*, a phrase of the same significance often met with in Elizabethan writers. Cf. *M. Wives*, II, ii, 103.

19–20 *I'll away*] I'll leave you, have nothing more to do with you. The clown does not quit the scene at once.

23 *quillets*] niceties, verbal distinctions.

29 *Do, good my friend*]. These words are omitted in the Folios.

*Enter* IAGO

In happy time, Iago.
IAGO. You have not been a-bed, then?
CAS. Why, no; the day had broke
Before we parted. I have made bold, Iago,
To send in to your wife: my suit to her
Is, that she will to virtuous Desdemona
Procure me some access.
IAGO. I'll send her to you presently;
And I'll devise a mean to draw the Moor
Out of the way, that your converse and business
May be more free.
CAS. I humbly thank you for 't. [*Exit Iago.*] I never knew
A Florentine more kind and honest.

*Enter* EMILIA

EMIL. Good morrow, good lieutenant: I am sorry
For your displeasure; but all will sure be well.
The general and his wife are talking of it,
And she speaks for you stoutly: the Moor replies,
That he you hurt is of great fame in Cyprus
And great affinity, and that in wholesome wisdom
He might not but refuse you; but he protests he loves you,

---

29 *In happy time*] "*À la bonne heure,*" well met.

39–40 *I never knew . . . honest*] Cassio, who is himself a Florentine, means that he never met a kinder man, even among his own countrymen.

42 *your displeasure*] the displeasure that you have incurred.
*sure*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *soone.*

And needs no other suitor but his likings
To take the safest occasion by the front
To bring you in again.
  CAS.                    Yet, I beseech you,
If you think fit, or that it may be done,
Give me advantage of some brief discourse
With Desdemona alone.
  EMIL.                    Pray you, come in:
I will bestow you where you shall have time
To speak your bosom freely.
  CAS.                    I am much bound to you.
[*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II — A ROOM IN THE CASTLE

*Enter* OTHELLO, IAGO, *and* Gentlemen

  OTH. These letters give, Iago, to the pilot;
And by him do my duties to the senate:
That done, I will be walking on the works;
Repair there to me.
  IAGO.                    Well, my good lord, I'll do 't.
  OTH. This fortification, gentlemen, shall we see 't?
  GENT. We'll wait upon your lordship. [*Exeunt.*

---

49 *To take . . . front*] This line is omitted from the Folios.
52 *advantage*] opportunity.
55 *I am much bound to you*] The First Quarto omits this sentence.

## SCENE III — THE GARDEN OF THE CASTLE

*Enter* DESDEMONA, CASSIO, *and* EMILIA

DES. Be thou assured, good Cassio, I will do
All my abilities in thy behalf.
EMIL. Good madam, do: I warrant it grieves my husband
As if the case were his.
DES. O, that's an honest fellow. Do not doubt, Cassio,
But I will have my lord and you again
As friendly as you were.
CAS. Bounteous madam,
Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio,
He's never any thing but your true servant.
DES. I know 't: I thank you. You do love my lord:
You have known him long; and be you well assured
He shall in strangeness stand no farther off
Than in a politic distance.
CAS. Ay, but, lady,
That policy may either last so long,

---

12 *in strangeness*] in aloofness of manner. Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *in strangest*.

14–18 *That policy . . . service*] That policy or plan of his to keep me out of office may persist so long, it may either be just kept alive by slight and scanty considerations, or it may find increased justification in

Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,
Or breed itself so out of circumstance,
That, I being absent and my place supplied,
My general will forget my love and service.
DES. Do not doubt that; before Emilia here
I give thee warrant of thy place: assure thee,
If I do vow a friendship, I 'll perform it
To the last article: my lord shall never rest;
I'll watch him tame and talk him out of patience;
His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift;
I'll intermingle every thing he does
With Cassio's suit: therefore be merry, Cassio;
For thy solicitor shall rather die
Than give thy cause away.

*Enter* OTHELLO *and* IAGO, *at a distance*

EMIL. Madam, here comes my lord.
CAS. Madam, I'll take my leave.
DES. Nay, stay and hear me speak.
CAS. Madam, not now: I am very ill at ease,
Unfit for mine own purposes.
DES. Well, do your discretion. [*Exit Cassio.*
IAGO. Ha! I like not that.
OTH. What dost thou say?

---

accidental turns of events, to such an extent that in my absence and with my place filled by another, the general will forget all about me, my loyalty and my past service.

19 *doubt*] fear.

23 *I 'll watch him tame*] Falconers kept hawks awake in order to tame them and make them obedient.

IAGO. Nothing, my lord: or if — I know not what.
OTH. Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?
IAGO. Cassio, my lord! No, sure, I cannot think it,
That he would steal away so guilty-like,
Seeing you coming.
OTH. I do believe 't was he.
DES. How now, my lord!
I have been talking with a suitor here,
A man that languishes in your displeasure.
OTH. Who is 't you mean?
DES. Why, your lieutenant, Cassio. Good my lord,
If I have any grace or power to move you,
His present reconciliation take;
For if he be not one that truly loves you,
That errs in ignorance and not in cunning,
I have no judgement in an honest face:
I prithee, call him back.
OTH. Went he hence now?
DES. Ay, sooth; so humbled,
That he hath left part of his grief with me,
To suffer with him. Good love, call him back.
OTH. Not now, sweet Desdemona; some other time.
DES. But shall 't be shortly?
OTH. The sooner, sweet, for you.
DES. Shall 't be to-night at supper?
OTH. No, not to-night.
DES. To-morrow dinner then?

---

48 *His present reconciliation*] The submission he now makes with a view to reconciliation.

50 *in cunning*] on purpose, knowingly.

OTH. I shall not dine at home;
I meet the captains at the citadel.
DES. Why then to-morrow night; or Tuesday morn;
On Tuesday noon, or night; on Wednesday morn:
I prithee, name the time; but let it not
Exceed three days: in faith, he's penitent;
And yet his trespass, in our common reason —
Save that, they say, the wars must make examples
Out of their best — is not almost a fault
To incur a private check. When shall he come?
Tell me, Othello: I wonder in my soul,
What you would ask me, that I should deny,
Or stand so mammering on. What! Michael Cassio,
That came a-wooing with you, and so many a time
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly
Hath ta'en your part; to have so much to do
To bring him in! Trust me, I could do much —
OTH. Prithee, no more: let him come when he will;
I will deny thee nothing.
DES. Why, this is not a boon;
'T is as I should entreat you wear your gloves,
Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm,
Or sue to you to do a peculiar profit
To your own person: nay, when I have a suit
Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed,

---

67 *their best*] Rowe's emendation of the original reading *her best.*
*is not . . . fault*] hardly amounts to such a fault as.

71 *mammering*] muttering hesitatingly.

82 *touch*] test, apply the touchstone to.

It shall be full of poise and difficult weight,
And fearful to be granted.
OTH. I will deny thee nothing:
Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this,
To leave me but a little to myself.
DES. Shall I deny you? no: farewell, my lord.
OTH. Farewell, my Desdemona: I'll come to thee straight.
DES. Emilia, come. Be as your fancies teach you;
Whate'er you be, I am obedient.
[*Exeunt Desdemona and Emilia.*
OTH. Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul,
But I do love thee! and when I love thee not,
Chaos is come again.
IAGO. My noble lord, —
OTH. What dost thou say, Iago?
IAGO. Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,
Know of your love?
OTH. He did, from first to last: why dost thou ask?
IAGO. But for a satisfaction of my thought;
No further harm.
OTH. Why of thy thought, Iago?

---

83 *full of poise and difficult weight*] of great moment and of heavy burden. Thus the Folios. "Poise" and "weight" mean so much the same thing that the First Quarto reading *difficulty* for *difficult weight* is worthy of consideration.

91 *Excellent wretch*] Excellent little woman; "wretch" is frequently a term of endearment, like "fool."

92–93 *I do love . . . Chaos is come again*] Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 1019–1020: "For he being dead, with him is beauty slain, And, beauty dead, *black chaos comes again*."

97 *He did, from first to last*] Cf. I, ii, 52, *supra*, and note.

**Iago.** I did not think he had been acquainted with her.

**Oth.** O, yes, and went between us very oft.

**Iago.** Indeed!

**Oth.** Indeed! ay, indeed: discern'st thou aught in that?
Is he not honest?

**Iago.** Honest, my lord!

**Oth.** Honest! ay, honest.

**Iago.** My lord, for aught I know.

**Oth.** What dost thou think?

**Iago.** Think, my lord!

**Oth.** Think, my lord! By heaven, he echoes me,
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown. Thou dost mean something:
I heard thee say even now, thou likedst not that,
When Cassio left my wife: what didst not like?
And when I told thee he was of my counsel
In my whole course of wooing, thou criedst "Indeed!"
And didst contract and purse thy brow together,
As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain
Some horrible conceit: if thou dost love me,
Show me thy thought.

**Iago.** My lord, you know I love you.

**Oth.** I think thou dost;
And for I know thou 'rt full of love and honesty
And weigh'st thy words before thou givest them breath,
Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more:
For such things in a false disloyal knave

---

110–111 *By heaven, he echoes . . . his thought*] Thus the First Quarto. The Folios read less graphically, *Alas, thou eccho'st . . . thy thought.*

Are tricks of custom; but in a man that's just
They're close delations, working from the heart,
That passion cannot rule.
  IAGO. For Michael Cassio,
I dare be sworn I think that he is honest.
  OTH. I think so too.
  IAGO. Men should be what they seem;
Or those that be not, would they might seem none!
  OTH. Certain, men should be what they seem.
  IAGO. Why then I think Cassio 's an honest man.
  OTH. Nay, yet there's more in this:
I prithee, speak to me as to thy thinkings,
As thou dost ruminate, and give thy worst of thoughts
The worst of words.
  IAGO. Good my lord, pardon me:
Though I am bound to every act of duty,
I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.
Utter my thoughts? Why, say they are vile and false;

---

127 *close delations*] Thus Johnson. The First Quarto reads *close denotements*, and the First Folio and later Quartos *close dilations*. "Delations," which has been interpreted as "accusations," like the Latin "delatio," is not apparently found elsewhere in Elizabethan literature in that sense. It is only found as an alternative spelling of "dilations," *i. e.*, delays, protractions. Probably "close delations" or "dilations" means mysterious or suspicious pauses.

128 *That passion cannot rule*] That cannot govern its emotion.

131 *Or those . . . seem none*] Or those men that be not what they seem, would they might not seem men at all, would they might have no semblance of men about them.

139–140 *are free to. Utter my thoughts?*] Thus the First Quarto, save that a comma follows *to* instead of the full stop. The Folios omit *to*. "Free" has the sense of "not bound," "free from any compulsion."

As where's that palace whereinto foul things
Sometimes intrude not? who has a breast so pure,
But some uncleanly apprehensions
Keep leets and law-days, and in session sit
With meditations lawful?
  OTH. Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,
If thou but think'st him wrong'd and makest his ear
A stranger to thy thoughts.
  IAGO. I do beseech you —
Though I perchance am vicious in my guess,
As, I confess, it is my nature's plague
To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy
Shapes faults that are not — that your wisdom yet,
From one that so imperfectly conceits,
Would take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble
Out of his scattering and unsure observance.
It were not for your quiet nor your good,

---

143–145 *But some . . . lawful?*] But that some unclean thoughts will not hold court and sit in session along with just and good thoughts. "Leets and law-days" both mean sittings of local courts of law, which took place every half-year, to revise and enforce police regulations. Kit Sly threatens to present the alewife of Wincot "at the leet." (*T. of Shrew*, Induction, II, 90.)

149–153 *Though I perchance . . . conceits*] Inasmuch as I for my part am apt to put a bad construction upon everything (indeed I confess I have the natural infirmity which leads me to pry into scandals, and often my suspicious temper imagines faults that are non-existent), I therefore beg that a man of your good sense will take no notice of suggestions coming from one that forms such defective conjectures. "*Conceits,*" appears in line 153 in all the early editions save the First Quarto, which reads *coniects*.

155 *scattering*] random.

Nor for my manhood, honesty, or wisdom,
To let you know my thoughts.
OTH. What dost thou mean?
IAGO. Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls:
Who steals my purse steals trash; 't is something, nothing;
'T was mine, 't is his, and has been slave to thousands;
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him
And makes me poor indeed.
OTH. By heaven, I'll know thy thoughts.
IAGO. You cannot, if my heart were in your hand;
Nor shall not, whilst 't is in my custody.
OTH. Ha!
IAGO. O, beware, my lord, of jealousy;
It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock
The meat it feeds on: that cuckold lives in bliss
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;
But, O, what damned minutes tells he o'er
Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves!

---

160 *immediate*] most intimate, peculiar.

170 *the green-eyed monster . . . mock*] Though yellow is the colour mainly associated with jealousy, green is also often a conventional epithet; cf. "green-eyed jealousy" in *Merch. of Ven.*, III, ii, 110. Here "jealousy" is personified as a sort of tiger or cat, which plays with or tortures the things which give it sustenance. The jealous man sacrifices his peace by toying with all the circumstances which feed his suspicion. Theobald somewhat imprudently substitutes *make* for *mock*, the reading of all the early editions.

172 *his wronger*] his faithless wife.

174 *strongly*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *soundly*.

OTH. O misery!
IAGO. Poor and content is rich, and rich enough;
But riches fineless is as poor as winter
To him that ever fears he shall be poor:
Good heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend
From jealousy!
OTH. Why, why is this?
Think'st thou I'ld make a life of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the moon
With fresh suspicions? No; to be once in doubt
Is once to be resolved: exchange me for a goat,
When I shall turn the business of my soul
To such exsufflicate and blown surmises,
Matching thy inference. 'T is not to make me jealous
To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
Is free of speech, sings, plays and dances well;
Where virtue is, these are more virtuous:
Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt;
For she had eyes, and chose me. No, Iago;
I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;
And on the proof, there is no more but this,
Away at once with love or jealousy!

---

177 *riches*] used as a singular. Cf. II, i, 83, *supra.*
*fineless*] endless; a word not known elsewhere. Cf. *Hamlet*, V, i, 103 : "Is this *the fine* [*i. e.*, the end] of his fines?"
*as poor as winter*] winter produces no fruits.

184 *resolved*] freed from uncertainty.

186 *exsufflicate*] swollen like a bubble, inflated. The word is found nowhere else, though exsufflate, *i. e.*, to blow out, is met with.

190 *these are more virtuous*] these graces make addition to virtue.

IAGO. I am glad of it; for now I shall have reason
To show the love and duty that I bear you
With franker spirit: therefore, as I am bound,
Receive it from me. I speak not yet of proof.
Look to your wife: observe her well with Cassio;
Wear your eye thus, not jealous nor secure:
I would not have your free and noble nature
Out of self-bounty be abused; look to 't:
I know our country disposition well;
In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks
They dare not show their husbands; their best conscience
Is not to leave 't undone, but keep 't unknown.
OTH. Dost thou say so?
IAGO. She did deceive her father, marrying you;
And when she seem'd to shake and fear your looks,
She loved them most.
OTH. And so she did.
IAGO. Why, go to then;
She that so young could give out such a seeming,
To seel her father's eyes up close as oak —
He thought 't was witchcraft — but I am much to blame;
I humbly do beseech you of your pardon
For too much loving you.
OTH. I am bound to thee for ever.

---

202 *secure*] careless, over-confident.

204 *self-bounty*] inherent generosity.

214 *seel*] close. Cf. I, iii, 269, *supra*, and note.
*close as oak*] close as the grain of oak. Thus all the early editions. *Hawk's* has been suggested for *oak*.

Iago. I see this hath a little dash'd your spirits.
Oth. Not a jot, not a jot.
Iago. I' faith, I fear it has.
I hope you will consider what is spoke
Comes from my love; but I do see you 're moved:
I am to pray you not to strain my speech
To grosser issues nor to larger reach
Than to suspicion.
Oth. I will not.
Iago. Should you do so, my lord,
My speech should fall into such vile success
As my thoughts aim not at. Cassio's my worthy friend —
My lord, I see you're moved.
Oth. No, not much moved:
I do not think but Desdemona's honest.
Iago. Long live she so! and long live you to think so!
Oth. And yet, how nature erring from itself —
Iago. Ay, there's the point: as — to be bold with you —
Not to affect many proposed matches
Of her own clime, complexion and degree,
Whereto we see in all things nature tends —
Foh! one may smell in such a will most rank,
Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural.
But pardon me: I do not in position
Distinctly speak of her; though I may fear

---

223 *To grosser issues*] To plainer conclusions.
226 *such vile success*] such a vile issue, end or conclusion.
236 *a will most rank*] a self-will overgrown, exuberant, ungovernable.
238 *in position*] in the way of deliberate assertion.

Her will, recoiling to her better judgement,
May fall to match you with her country forms,
And happily repent.
  OTH. Farewell, farewell:
If more thou dost perceive, let me know more;
Set on thy wife to observe: leave me, Iago.
  IAGO. [*Going*] My lord, I take my leave.
  OTH. Why did I marry? This honest creature doubtless
Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.
  IAGO. [*Returning*] My lord, I would I might entreat your honour
To scan this thing no further; leave it to time:
Though it be fit that Cassio have his place,
For sure he fills it up with great ability,
Yet, if you please to hold him off awhile,
You shall by that perceive him and his means:
Note if your lady strain his entertainment
With any strong or vehement importunity;
Much will be seen in that. In the mean time,
Let me be thought too busy in my fears —
As worthy cause I have to fear I am —
And hold her free, I do beseech your honour.
  OTH. Fear not my government.

---

240–242 *Her will . . . repent*] Her will, reverting to or coming under the sway of her better or more fully considered judgment, may come to compare you with the form or outward aspect of her fellow-countrymen, and perhaps repent of her alliance with you.

253 *his means*] the way he is working (through Desdemona).

254 *strain his entertainment*] press for his readmission to service.

260 *government*] self-control.

IAGO. I once more take my leave. [*Exit.*
OTH. This fellow 's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,
Of human dealings. If I do prove her haggard,
Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,
I'ld whistle her off and let her down the wind
To prey at fortune. Haply, for I am black
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers have, or for I am declined
Into the vale of years, — yet that's not much —
She's gone; I am abused, and my relief
Must be to loathe her. O curse of marriage,
That we can call these delicate creatures ours,
And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad,
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
Than keep a corner in the thing I love
For others' uses. Yet, 't is the plague of great ones;
Prerogatived are they less than the base;

---

263–264 *And knows all qualities . . . Of human dealings*] And knows all dispositions . . . of human nature.

264–265 *If I do prove . . . heart-strings*] Othello is using technical terms of falconry. "Haggard," a wild or untrained hawk, is sometimes used for "courtesan." "Jesses" are the leathern thongs which bind the hawk's foot to the falconer's wrist.

266 *I'ld whistle . . . wind*] Falconers were wont to whistle to untameable and therefore worthless hawks and so induce them to leave the leash, and fly away with the wind, thus abandoning them for good. Hawks only returned to the falconer's hand when they were let fly against the wind.

268 *parts*] gifts, endowments.

269 *chamberers*] haunters of drawing-rooms.

278 *Prerogatived . . . base*] They have smaller prerogatives or privileges than men in low positions.

'T is destiny unshunnable, like death:
Even then this forked plague is fated to us
When we do quicken. Desdemona comes:

*Re-enter* DESDEMONA *and* EMILIA

If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself!
I'll not believe 't.
DES. How now, my dear Othello!
Your dinner, and the generous islanders
By you invited, do attend your presence.
OTH. I am to blame.
DES. Why do you speak so faintly?
Are you not well?
OTH. I have a pain upon my forehead here.
DES. Faith, that's with watching; 't will away again:
Let me but bind it hard, within this hour
It will be well.
OTH. Your napkin is too little;
*[He puts the handkerchief from him; and she drops it.*
Let it alone. Come, I'll go in with you.
DES. I am very sorry that you are not well.
*[Exeunt Othello and Desdemona.*
EMIL. I am glad I have found this napkin:
This was her first remembrance from the Moor:
My wayward husband hath a hundred times
Woo'd me to steal it; but she so loves the token,

---

280 *this forked plague*] this plague of conjugal infidelity, which causes forked horns to sprout on the deceived husband's head.

281 *When we do quicken*] When we are born.

284 *generous islanders*] noblemen or gentry of the island.

291 *napkin*] handkerchief.

295 *remembrance*] souvenir.

For he conjured her she should ever keep it,
That she reserves it evermore about her
To kiss and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out,
And give 't Iago: what he will do with it
Heaven knows, not I;
I nothing but to please his fantasy.

*Re-enter* IAGO

IAGO. How now! what do you here alone?
EMIL. Do not you chide; I have a thing for you.
IAGO. A thing for me? it is a common thing —
EMIL. Ha!
IAGO. To have a foolish wife.
EMIL. O, is that all? What will you give me now
For that same handkerchief?
IAGO. What handkerchief?
EMIL. What handkerchief!
Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona;
That which so often you did bid me steal.
IAGO. Hast stol'n it from her?
EMIL. No, faith; she let it drop by negligence,
And, to the advantage, I being here took 't up.
Look, here it is.
IAGO. A good wench; give it me.
EMIL. What will you do with 't, that you have been so earnest
To have me filch it?

---

300 *the work ta'en out*] the embroidery copied. Cf. III, iv, 181, *infra*, "Take me this work out," and IV, i, 148, *seq*.

316 *to the advantage*] on the opportunity, in the nick of time.

**Iago.** [*Snatching it*] Why, what's that to you?
**Emil.** If 't be not for some purpose of import,
Give't me again: poor lady, she 'll run mad
When she shall lack it.
**Iago.** Be not acknown on 't; I have use for it.
Go, leave me. [*Exit Emilia.*
I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,
And let him find it. Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ: this may do something.
The Moor already changes with my poison:
Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons,
Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,
But with a little act upon the blood
Burn like the mines of sulphur. I did say so:
Look, where he comes!

*Re-enter* OTHELLO

Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou owedst yesterday.
**Oth.** Ha! ha! false to me?
**Iago.** Why, how now, general! no more of that.
**Oth.** Avaunt! be gone! thou hast set me on the rack:

---

323 *Be not acknown on't*] Know nothing about it, do not acknowledge that you know anything about it.

333 *I did say so*] I mean what I say, I know what I mean.

334 *mandragora*] an herb well known as a soporific or opiate.

I swear 't is better to be much abused
Than but to know 't a little.
IAGO. How now, my lord!
OTH. What sense had I of her stol'n hours of lust?
I saw't not, thought it not, it harm'd not me:
I slept the next night well, was free and merry;
I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips:
He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stol'n,
Let him not know't and he's not robb'd at all.
IAGO. I am sorry to hear this.
OTH. I had been happy, if the general camp,
Pioners and all, had tasted her sweet body,
So I had nothing known. O, now for ever
Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!
Farewell the plumed troop and the big wars
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell,
Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner and all quality,
Pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war!
And, O you mortal engines, whose rude throats
The immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,
Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!
IAGO. Is't possible, my lord?
OTH. Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore;
Be sure of it; give me the ocular proof;

---

340 *much abused*] altogether deceived.
350 *Pioners*] Sappers and miners, men of the lowest military rank.
358 *circumstance*] ceremonious detail.
359 *mortal*] deadly.

Or, by the worth of man's eternal soul,
Thou hadst been better have been born a dog
Than answer my waked wrath!
  IAGO. Is 't come to this?
  OTH. Make me to see't; or at the least so prove it,
That the probation bear no hinge nor loop
To hang a doubt on; or woe upon thy life!
  IAGO. My noble lord, —
  OTH. If thou dost slander her and torture me,
Never pray more; abandon all remorse;
On horror's head horrors accumulate;
Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amazed;
For nothing canst thou to damnation add
Greater than that.
  IAGO. O grace! O heaven defend me!
Are you a man? have you a soul or sense?
God be wi' you; take mine office. O wretched fool,
That livest to make thine honesty a vice!
O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O world,
To be direct and honest is not safe.
I thank you for this profit, and from hence
I 'll love no friend sith love breeds such offence.
  OTH. Nay, stay: thou shouldst be honest.
  IAGO. I should be wise; for honesty's a fool,
And loses that it works for.
  OTH. By the world,

---

365 *man's*] Thus the First Quarto. The Folios read *mine*.

373 *remorse*] sense of conscience. Cf. line 459, *infra*.

383 *profit*] profitable knowledge.

387–394 *By the world . . . would be satisfied*] These lines are omitted from the First Quarto.

I think my wife be honest, and think she is not;
I think that thou art just, and think thou art not:
I'll have some proof. Her name, that was as fresh
As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black
As mine own face. If there be cords, or knives,
Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,
I'll not endure it. Would I were satisfied!
  IAGO. I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion:
I do repent me that I put it to you.
You would be satisfied?
  OTH. Would! nay, I will.
  IAGO. And may: but, how? how satisfied, my lord?
Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on?
Behold her topp'd?
  OTH. Death and damnation! O!
  IAGO. It were a tedious difficulty, I think,
To bring them to that prospect: damn them then,
If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster
More than their own! What then? how then?
What shall I say? Where's satisfaction?
It is impossible you should see this,
Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys,
As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross

---

390 *Her*] Thus the Second and later Quartos. The Folios read less satisfactorily *My*.

399 *supervisor*] onlooker.

403–404 *If ever . . . their own*] If ever any other mortal eyes in addition to their own see their heads on the same pillow.

407 *prime*] forward, ready, eager.

408–9 *As salt . . . drunk*] As lascivious as wolves in their lusthood, and (were they) thoughtless fools as licentious as ignorance or inexperience can be when it is made drunk.

As ignorance made drunk. But yet, I say,
If imputation and strong circumstances,
Which lead directly to the door of truth,
Will give you satisfaction, you may have 't.
  OTH. Give me a living reason she 's disloyal.
  IAGO. I do not like the office:
But sith I am enter'd in this cause so far,
Prick'd to 't by foolish honesty and love,
I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately,
And being troubled with a raging tooth,
I could not sleep.
There are a kind of men so loose of soul,
That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs:
One of this kind is Cassio:
In sleep I heard him say "Sweet Desdemona,
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves;"
And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand,
Cry "O sweet creature!" and then kiss me hard,
As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots,
That grew upon my lips: then laid his leg
Over my thigh, and sigh'd and kiss'd, and then
Cried "Cursed fate that gave thee to the Moor!"
  OTH. O monstrous! monstrous!
  IAGO. Nay, this was but his dream.
  OTH. But this denoted a foregone conclusion:
'T is a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream.

---

410 *If imputation . . . circumstances*] If inference and strong circumstantial evidence.

413 *a living reason*] a reason founded on actual fact, drawn from life.

432 *a foregone conclusion*] an antecedent experience.

433 *a shrewd doubt*] a well-founded suspicion.

IAGO. And this may help to thicken other proofs
That do demonstrate thinly.
OTH. I'll tear her all to pieces.
IAGO. Nay, but be wise: yet we see nothing done;
She may be honest yet. Tell me but this;
Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief
Spotted with strawberries in your wife's hand?
OTH. I gave her such a one; 't was my first gift.
IAGO. I know not that: but such a handkerchief —
I am sure it was your wife's — did I to-day
See Cassio wipe his beard with.
OTH. If it be that, —
IAGO. If it be that, or any that was hers,
It speaks against her with the other proofs.
OTH. O, that the slave had forty thousand lives!
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge.
Now do I see 't is true. Look here, Iago;
All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven:
'T is gone.
Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell!
Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne
To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,
For 't is of aspics' tongues!
IAGO. Yet be content.

---

439 *Spotted*] Embroidered.

451 *cell*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *hell*.

452 *hearted throne*] throne in the heart.

453 *fraught*] burden, freight.

454 *aspics' tongues*] The "asp of the Nile," with its deadly bite is Cleopatra's instrument of suicide. The rare form "aspic" for "asp" is found in *Ant. and Cleop.*, V, ii, 291.

OTH., O, blood, blood, blood!
IAGO. Patience, I say; your mind perhaps may change.
OTH. Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont;
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable and wide revenge
Swallow them up. Now, by yond marble heaven,
In the due reverence of a sacred vow [*Kneels.*
I here engage my words.
IAGO. Do not rise yet. [*Kneels.*
Witness, you ever-burning lights above,
You elements that clip us round about,
Witness that here Iago doth give up
The execution of his wit, hands, heart,
To wrong'd Othello's service! Let him command,
And to obey shall be in me remorse,
What bloody business ever. [*They rise.*

---

457–464 *Iago . . . heaven*] These lines are omitted from the First Quarto.

457 *the Pontic sea*] the Pontic, now the Black sea, according to Pliny and the ancient geographers, had only a flowing tide, and never ebbed, for ever flowing into the Propontic, *i. e.*, the sea of Marmora, and the Hellespont, *i. e.*, the Bosphorus.

463 *capable*] capacious, comprehensive.

468 *clip*] embrace.

470 *execution*] exercise.

472–473 *to obey . . . business ever*] to perform what he commands shall be with me matter of conscience whatever the bloody work he orders For "remorse," cf. line 372, *supra.*

OTH. I greet thy love,
Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous,
And will upon the instant put thee to 't:
Within these three days let me hear thee say
That Cassio 's not alive.
IAGO. My friend is dead; 't is done at your request:
But let her live.
OTH. Damn her, lewd minx! O, damn her!
Come, go with me apart; I will withdraw,
To furnish me with some swift means of death
For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.
IAGO. I am your own for ever. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE IV — BEFORE THE CASTLE

*Enter* DESDEMONA, EMILIA, *and* Clown

DES. Do you know, sirrah, where Lieutenant Cassio lies?

CLO. I dare not say he lies any where.

DES. Why, man?

CLO. He's a soldier; and for one to say a soldier lies, is stabbing.

DES. Go to: where lodges he?

CLO. To tell you where he lodges, is to tell you where I lie.

---

475 *put thee to 't*] test you.
1 *lies*] lives, resides.
7-9 *To tell you . . . of this*] This passage is omitted from the First Quarto.

DES. Can any thing be made of this?

CLO. I know not where he lodges; and for me to devise a lodging, and say he lies here or he lies there, were to lie in mine own throat.

DES. Can you inquire him out and be edified by report?

CLO. I will catechize the world for him; that is, make questions and by them answer.

DES. Seek him, bid him come hither: tell him I have moved my lord on his behalf and hope all will be well.

CLO. To do this is within the compass of man's wit, and therefore I will attempt the doing it. [*Exit.*

DES. Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?

EMIL. I know not, madam.

DES. Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse
Full of crusadoes: and, but my noble Moor
Is true of mind and made of no such baseness
As jealous creatures are, it were enough
To put him to ill thinking.

EMIL. Is he not jealous?

DES. Who, he? I think the sun where he was born
Drew all such humours from him.

---

12 *in mine own throat*] deliberately, wilfully.

15 *by them answer*] by the replies to my questions get information for my answer.

23 *crusadoes*] gold coins of Portugal, marked with a cross. They were moulded of three values, varying from 6s. 8d. to 9s. according to the size of the cross stamped upon them.

**Emil.** Look, where he comes.
**Des.** I will not leave him now till Cassio
Be call'd to him.

*Enter* Othello

How is 't with you, my lord?
**Oth.** Well, my good lady. [*Aside*] O, hardness to dissemble!
How do you, Desdemona?
**Des.** Well, my good lord.
**Oth.** Give me your hand: this hand is moist, my lady.
**Des.** It yet has felt no age nor known no sorrow.
**Oth.** This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart:
Hot, hot, and moist: this hand of yours requires
A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,
Much castigation, exercise devout;
For here 's a young and sweating devil here,
That commonly rebels. 'T is a good hand,
A frank one.
**Des.** You may, indeed, say so;
For 't was that hand that gave away my heart.
**Oth.** A liberal hand: the hearts of old gave hands;
But our new heraldry is hands, not hearts.

---

33 *this hand is moist*] a moist hand was commonly held to be a sign of an amorous disposition, as a dry hand was held to be a sign of indifference to love. Cf. *Tw. Night*, I, iii, 69, and note.

35 *fruitfulness and liberal heart*] a bountiful disposition and a heart inclined to licentiousness.

37 *A sequester from liberty*] A seclusion from liberty, some confinement.

44 *our new heraldry . . hearts*] probably this line means nothing more than that the fashion of the present day is to offer hands insincerely

DES. I cannot speak of this. Come now, your
promise.
OTH. What promise, chuck?
DES. I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.
OTH. I have a salt and sorry rheum offends me;
Lend me thy handkerchief.
DES. Here, my lord.
OTH. That which I gave you.
DES. I have it not about me.
OTH. Not?
DES. No, indeed, my lord.
OTH. That's a fault. That handkerchief
Did an Egyptian to my mother give;
She was a charmer, and could almost read
The thoughts of people: she told her, while she kept it
'T would make her amiable and subdue my father

---

without hearts. Sir William Cornwallis in his Essays in 1601 lamented the novel vogue of giving hands in one direction and hearts in another. The common notion that reference is made in this line to James I's newly created order of baronets, of which "the bloody hand" was an heraldic badge, seems, unless the line be treated as an interpolation, to be inconsistent with the fact that the creation of baronets only began in 1611, fully six years after this play was written.

46 *chuck*] a term of endearment.

48 *sorry rheum*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *sullen rheum*, *i. e.*, an obstinately troublesome cold.

55–56 *That handkerchief . . . give*] Othello gives a different account of the handkerchief, V, ii, 219–220, *infra*, where he describes it as "an antique token My father gave my mother." The discrepancy may be an oversight on Shakespeare's part; but more probably Othello is inventing the present story in order to impress and alarm his wife.

56 *an Egyptian*] a gipsy.

57 *charmer*] a practiser of enchantments, a witch.

Entirely to her love, but if she lost it
Or made a gift of it, my father’s eye
Should hold her loathed and his spirits should hunt
After new fancies: she dying gave it me,
And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,
To give it her. I did so: and take heed on ’t;
Make it a darling like your precious eye;
To lose ’t or give ’t away were such perdition
As nothing else could match.
  DES. Is ’t possible?
  OTH. ’T is true: there’s magic in the web of it:
A sibyl, that had number’d in the world
The sun to course two hundred compasses,
In her prophetic fury sew’d the work;
The worms were hallow’d that did breed the silk;
And it was dyed in mummy which the skilful
Conserved of maidens’ hearts.
  DES. Indeed! is ’t true?
  OTH. Most veritable; therefore look to ’t well.
  DES. Then would to God that I had never seen ’t!
  OTH. Ha! wherefore?
  DES. Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

---

65 *give it her*] give it to my wife.

70 *sibyl*] According to Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, the Cumæan Sibyl had lived seven centuries, and was to live three hundred years more. Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, I, ii, 95: “If I live to be as old as Sibylla.” Here a sibyl’s age is reckoned at two hundred years or compasses of the sun’s course. “The sun to course” is a harsh construction. But cf. such a phrase as “I counted the clock *to strike* four.”

74 *mummy*] The liquid oozing from Egyptian mummies, of a transparent brown colour, which painters valued highly.

Oth. Is 't lost? is 't gone? speak, is it out o' the
way?
Des. Heaven bless us!
Oth. Say you?
Des. It is not lost; but what an if it were?
Oth. How!
Des. I say, it is not lost.
Oth. Fetch 't, let me see it.
Des. Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now.
This is a trick to put me from my suit:
Pray you, let Cassio be received again.
Oth. Fetch me the handkerchief: my mind misgives.
Des. Come, come;
You'll never meet a more sufficient man.
Oth. The handkerchief!
Des. I pray, talk me of Cassio.
Oth. The handkerchief!
Des. A man that all his time
Hath founded his good fortunes on your love,
Shared dangers with you, —
Oth. The handkerchief!
Des. In sooth, you are to blame.
Oth. Away! [*Exit.*
Emil. Is not this man jealous?
Des. I ne'er saw this before.
Sure there's some wonder in this handkerchief:
I am most unhappy in the loss of it.

---

82 *Say you?*] What are you saying?

93–94 *I pray . . . handkerchief*] These words are found only in the First Quarto.

**Emil.** 'T is not a year or two shows us a man:
They are all but stomachs and we all but food;
They eat us hungerly, and when they are full
They belch us. Look you, Cassio and my husband.

*Enter* Cassio *and* Iago

**Iago.** There is no other way; 't is she must do 't:
And, lo, the happiness! go and importune her.
**Des.** How now, good Cassio! what's the news with you?
**Cas.** Madam, my former suit: I do beseech you
That by your virtuous means I may again
Exist, and be a member of his love
Whom I with all the office of my heart
Entirely honour: I would not be delay'd.
If my offence be of such mortal kind,
That nor my service past nor present sorrows
Nor purposed merit in futurity
Can ransom me into his love again,
But to know so must be my benefit;
So shall I clothe me in a forced content
And shut myself up in some other course
To fortune's alms.
**Des.** Alas, thrice-gentle Cassio!

---

106 *hungerly*] ravenously.

109 *the happiness*] the happy chance, the good luck.

121–123 *So shall . . . alms*] So shall I have to content myself on compulsion and devote myself to some other course of life, waiting for such relief as the accidental hand of charity may offer. *Shut* is the reading of all the early editions save the First Quarto, which has *shoote*, a difficult word to explain here.

My advocation is not now in tune;
My lord is not my lord, nor should I know him
Were he in favour as in humour alter'd.
So help me every spirit sanctified,
As I have spoken for you all my best
And stood within the blank of his displeasure
For my free speech! You must awhile be patient:
What I can do I will; and more I will
Than for myself I dare: let that suffice you.
  IAGO. Is my lord angry?
  EMIL. He went hence but now,
And certainly in strange unquietness.
  IAGO. Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon,
When it hath blown his ranks into the air,
And, like the devil, from his very arm
Puff'd his own brother; and can he be angry?
Something of moment then: I will go meet him:
There's matter in 't indeed if he be angry.
  DES. I prithee, do so. [*Exit Iago.*
Something sure of state,
Either from Venice or some unhatch'd practice
Made demonstrable here in Cyprus to him,
Hath puddled his clear spirit; and in such cases

---

124 *advocation*] advocacy; a rare word.

126 *in favour*] in look, in countenance.

129 *within the blank*] full within the range. The "blank" was the white mark on the centre of the target.

138 *Puff'd his own brother*] There is aposiopesis here. Some words like "yet he stood unruffled" are understood after *brother*.

142 *unhatch'd practice*] unrevealed or undeveloped plot or conspiracy.

144 *puddled*] clouded or mudded.

Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,
Though great ones are their object. 'T is even so;
For let our finger ache, and it indues
Our other healthful members even to that sense
Of pain: nay, we must think men are not gods,
Nor of them look for such observancy
As fits the bridal. Beshrew me much, Emilia,
I was, unhandsome warrior as I am,
Arraigning his unkindness with my soul;
But now I find I had suborn'd the witness,
And he's indicted falsely.
  EMIL. Pray heaven it be state-matters, as you think,
And no conception nor no jealous toy
Concerning you.
  DES. Alas the day, I never gave him cause!
  EMIL. But jealous souls will not be answer'd so;
They are not ever jealous for the cause,
But jealous for they are jealous: 't is a monster
Begot upon itself, born on itself.
  DES. Heaven keep that monster from Othello's mind!
  EMIL. Lady, amen.
  DES. I will go seek him. Cassio, walk hereabout:
If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit,
And seek to effect it to my uttermost.
  CAS. I humbly thank your ladyship.
[*Exeunt Desdemona and Emilia.*

---

150 *observancy*] watchful attendance.

152 *unhandsome warrior*] ungenerous assailant; a reminiscence of Othello's "my sweet warrior" (II, i, 180, *supra*).

157 *jealous toy*] suspicious fancy.

*Enter* BIANCA

BIAN. Save you, friend Cassio!
CAS. What make you from home?
How is it with you, my most fair Bianca?
I' faith, sweet love, I was coming to your house.
BIAN. And I was going to your lodging, Cassio.
What, keep a week away? seven days and nights?
Eight score eight hours? and lovers' absent hours,
More tedious than the dial eight score times?
O weary reckoning!
CAS. Pardon me, Bianca:
I have this while with leaden thoughts been press'd;
But I shall in a more continuate time
Strike off this score of absence. Sweet Bianca,
[*Giving her Desdemona's handkerchief.*
Take me this work out.
BIAN. O Cassio, whence came this?
This is some token from a newer friend:
To the felt absence now I feel a cause:
Is't come to this? Well, well.
CAS. Go to, woman!
Throw your vile guesses in the devil's teeth,
From whence you have them. You are jealous now
That this is from some mistress, some remembrance:
No, by my faith, Bianca.

---

179 *continuate*] continuous, uninterrupted, unbroken. Thus all the early editions, save the First Quarto, which gives *conuenient*.

181 *Take me this work out*] Copy this embroidery for me. Cf. III, iii, 300, *supra*.

**Bian.** Why, whose is it?
**Cas.** I know not, sweet: I found it in my chamber.
I like the work well: ere it be demanded —
As like enough it will — I 'ld have it copied:
Take it, and do 't; and leave me for this time.
**Bian.** Leave you! wherefore?
**Cas.** I do attend here on the general;
And think it no addition, nor my wish,
To have him see me woman'd.
**Bian.** Why, I pray you?
**Cas.** Not that I love you not.
**Bian.** But that you do not love me.
I pray you, bring me on the way a little;
And say if I shall see you soon at night.
**Cas.** 'T is but a little way that I can bring you;
For I attend here: but I 'll see you soon.
**Bian.** 'T is very good; I must be circumstanced.
[*Exeunt.*

---

195 *addition*] title of credit.

196 *woman'd*] in the company of a woman.

196–197 *Why . . . love you not*] These speeches are omitted from the First Quarto.

202 *be circumstanced*] conform to circumstance, submit to neglect.

## ACT FOURTH — SCENE I — CYPRUS

### *BEFORE THE CASTLE*

*Enter* OTHELLO *and* IAGO

IAGO

WILL YOU THINK SO?
  OTH. Think so, Iago!
  IAGO. What,
To kiss in private?
  OTH. An unauthorized kiss.
  IAGO. Or to be naked with her friend in bed
An hour or more, not meaning any harm?
  OTH. Naked in bed, Iago, and not mean harm!
It is hypocrisy against the devil:
They that mean virtuously and yet do so,
The devil their virtue tempts and they tempt heaven.
  IAGO. So they do nothing, 't is a venial slip:
But if I give my wife a handkerchief —
  OTH. What then?

IAGO. Why, then, 't is hers, my lord; and being hers,
She may, I think, bestow 't on any man.
OTH. She is protectress of her honour too:
May she give that?
IAGO. Her honour is an essence that's not seen:
They have it very oft that have it not:
But for the handkerchief —
OTH. By heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it:
Thou said'st — O, it comes o'er my memory,
As doth the raven o'er the infected house,
Boding to all — he had my handkerchief.
IAGO. Ay, what of that?
OTH. That's not so good now.
IAGO. What,
If I had said I had seen him do you wrong?
Or heard him say — as knaves be such abroad,
Who having, by their own importunate suit,
Or voluntary dotage of some mistress,

---

1 *Will you think so?*] Iago has been perversely arguing, it must be assumed, that men and women may be found in compromising situations without justifying the natural suspicion of guilty intercourse.

6 *It is hypocrisy against the devil*] It is hypocrisy which cheats the devil, when persons appear to be committing sins, which they are as a matter of fact avoiding.

8 *they tempt heaven*] they try the patience of heaven (by trying how near they can go towards vice without actually succumbing to it).

17 *They have . . . it not*] They often have the outward semblances of honour, who are in reality persons of dishonour.

21–22 *the raven . . . Boding to all*] the raven, the bird of ill omen, brooded over houses infected with sickness, foreboding disaster to all inside.

23 *That's not so good now*] You are not showing your usual good sense.

Convinced or supplied them, cannot choose
But they must blab —
  OTH. Hath he said any thing?
  IAGO. He hath, my lord; but be you well assured,
No more than he'll unswear.
  OTH. What hath he said?
  IAGO. Faith, that he did — I know not what he did.
  OTH. What? what?
  IAGO. Lie —
  OTH. With her?
  IAGO. With her, on her; what you will.

  OTH. Lie with her! lie on her! — We say lie on her, when they belie her. — Lie with her! 'Zounds, that's fulsome! Handkerchief — confessions — handkerchief! — To confess, and be hanged for his labour; first, to be hanged, and then to confess. I tremble at it. Nature would not invest herself in such shadowing passion without some instruction. It is not words that shakes me thus. Pish! Noses, ears and lips. Is't possible? — Confess? — Handkerchief? — O devil! [*Falls in a trance.*

  IAGO. Work on,

---

28 *Convinced or supplied them*] Overcome their reluctance or complied with their wish.

37–43 *To confess . . . devil*] This passage is omitted from the First Quarto.

38 *confess, and be hanged*] a proverbial ejaculation of impatience.

39–41 *Nature . . . instruction*] Othello here experiences sensations which are warnings of the apoplectic fit which immediately follows. He means in this passage that nature would not be likely to set up such paroxysm of passion, which is darkening (or casting a shadow over) his vision, unless she were acting on sure information.

My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught;
And many worthy and chaste dames even thus,
All guiltless, meet reproach. What, ho! my lord!
My lord, I say! Othello!

*Enter* CASSIO

How now, Cassio!
CAS. What's the matter?
IAGO. My lord is fall'n into an epilepsy:
This is his second fit; he had one yesterday.
CAS. Rub him about the temples.
IAGO. No, forbear;
The lethargy must have his quiet course:
If not, he foams at mouth, and by and by
Breaks out to savage madness. Look, he stirs:
Do you withdraw yourself a little while,
He will recover straight: when he is gone,
I would on great occasion speak with you. [*Exit Cassio.*
How is it, general? have you not hurt your head?
OTH. Dost thou mock me?
IAGO. I mock you! no, by heaven.
Would you would bear your fortune like a man!
OTH. A horned man's a monster and a beast.
IAGO. There's many a beast then in a populous city,
And many a civil monster.
OTH. Did he confess it?
IAGO. Good sir, be a man;
Think every bearded fellow that 's but yoked
May draw with you: there 's millions now alive

That nightly lie in those unproper beds
Which they dare swear peculiar: your case is better.
O, 't is the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock,
To lip a wanton in a secure couch,
And to suppose her chaste! No, let me know;
And knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.
OTH. O, thou art wise; 't is certain.
IAGO. Stand you awhile apart;
Confine yourself but in a patient list.
Whilst you were here o'erwhelmed with your grief —
A passion most unsuiting such a man —
Cassio came hither: I shifted him away,
And laid good 'scuse upon your ecstasy;
Bade him anon return and here speak with me;
The which he promised. Do but encave yourself,
And mark the fleers, the gibes and notable scorns,
That dwell in every region of his face;
For I will make him tell the tale anew,
Where, how, how oft, how long ago and when
He hath and is again to cope your wife:

---

68–69 *in those . . . peculiar*] in those beds which are common property, though oath may be taken that they are the husband's exclusive possession.

71 *a secure couch*] a couch where a man's confidence in his wife's fidelity is undisturbed.

75 *in a patient list*] within the bounds of patience.

76 *here o'erwhelmed*] Thus all the early editions save the First Quarto which reads *here ere while, mad.*

77 *unsuiting*] Thus the Duke of Devonshire's copy of the First Quarto. Capell's copy of the same edition reads, like the Second Quarto, *vnfitting*. The Folios misprint *resulting*.

79 *your ecstasy*] your fit of epilepsy.

I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience;
Or I shall say you are all in all in spleen,
And nothing of a man.
OTH. Dost thou hear, Iago?
I will be found most cunning in my patience;
But — dost thou hear? — most bloody.
IAGO. That's not amiss;
But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw?
[*Othello retires.*
Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,
A housewife that by selling her desires
Buys herself bread and clothes: it is a creature
That dotes on Cassio; as 't is the strumpet's plague
To beguile many and be beguiled by one.
He, when he hears of her, cannot refrain
From the excess of laughter. Here he comes.

*Re-enter* CASSIO

As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad;
And his unbookish jealousy must construe
Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures and light behaviour,
Quite in the wrong. How do you now, lieutenant?
CAS. The worser that you give me the addition
Whose want even kills me.

---

88 *all in all in spleen*] altogether made up of spleen, which was reckoned the main seat of tempestuous passion.

92 *keep time*] be patient; avoid haste.

94 *housewife*] used like "hussy."

101 *unbookish*] ignorant, uninformed.
*construe*] Rowe's spelling of the Quarto reading *conster*. The Folios misprint *conserue*.

104 *addition*] title.

Iago. Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure on't.
Now, if this suit lay in Bianca's power,
How quickly should you speed!
Cas. Alas, poor caitiff!
Oth. Look, how he laughs already!
Iago. I never knew a woman love man so.
Cas. Alas, poor rogue! I think, i' faith, she loves me.
Oth. Now he denies it faintly and laughs it out.
Iago. Do you hear, Cassio?
Oth. Now he importunes him
To tell it o'er: go to; well said, well said.
Iago. She gives it out that you shall marry her:
Do you intend it?
Cas. Ha, ha, ha!
Oth. Do you triumph, Roman? do you triumph?
Cas. I marry her! what, a customer! I prithee, bear some charity to my wit; do not think it so unwholesome. Ha, ha, ha!
Oth. So, so, so, so: they laugh that win.
Iago. Faith, the cry goes that you shall marry her.
Cas. Prithee, say true.
Iago. I am a very villain else.
Oth. Have you scored me? Well.
Cas. This is the monkey's own giving out: she is

---

114 *well said*] well done; a common usage.

118 *triumph, Roman?*] Triumphs were so closely identified with Rome that the use of the one word suggests the other.

119 *a customer*] a loose woman who invites custom.

126 *Have you scored me?*] Have you paid your score off me? Cf. "do you triumph?" l. 118, *supra*.

persuaded I will marry her, out of her own love and flattery, not out of my promise.

Oth. Iago beckons me; now he begins the story.

Cas. She was here even now: she haunts me in every place. I was the other day talking on the sea-bank with certain Venetians; and thither comes the bauble, and, by this hand, she falls me thus about my neck—

Oth. Crying "O dear Cassio!" as it were: his gesture imports it.

Cas. So hangs and lolls and weeps upon me; so hales and pulls me: ha, ha, ha!

Oth. Now he tells how she plucked him to my chamber. O, I see that nose of yours, but not that dog I shall throw it to.

Cas. Well, I must leave her company.

Iago. Before me! look, where she comes.

Cas. 'T is such another fitchew! marry, a perfumed one.

*Enter* Bianca

What do you mean by this haunting of me?

Bian. Let the devil and his dam haunt you! What did you mean by that same handkerchief you gave me even now? I was a fine fool to take it. I must take out the work? A likely piece of work, that you should find it in your chamber, and not know who left it there! This is some minx's token, and I must take out the

---

133 *the bauble*] the trivial creature.

144 *'Tis such another fitchew*] She 's just like a polecat.

148–149 *take out the work*] copy the embroidery. So lines 151, 152. Cf. III, iii, 300, and III, iv, 181, *supra*.

work? There; give it your hobby-horse: wheresoever you had it, I'll take out no work on't.

CAS. How now, my sweet Bianca! how now! how now!

OTH. By heaven, that should be my handkerchief!

BIAN. An you'll come to supper to-night, you may; an you will not, come when you are next prepared for. [*Exit.*

IAGO. After her, after her.

CAS. Faith, I must; she'll rail i' the street else.

IAGO. Will you sup there?

CAS. Faith, I intend so.

IAGO. Well, I may chance to see you; for I would very fain speak with you.

CAS. Prithee, come; will you?

IAGO. Go to; say no more. [*Exit Cassio.*

OTH. [*Advancing*] How shall I murder him, Iago?

IAGO. Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice?

OTH. O Iago!

IAGO. And did you see the handkerchief?

OTH. Was that mine?

IAGO. Yours, by this hand: and to see how he prizes the foolish woman your wife! she gave it him, and he hath given it his whore.

OTH. I would have him nine years a-killing. A fine woman! a fair woman! a sweet woman!

IAGO. Nay, you must forget that.

OTH. Ay, let her rot, and perish, and be damned to-night: for she shall not live: no, my heart is turned to

---

152 *hobby-horse*] a term of contempt for a frivolous woman.

stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand. O, the world hath not a sweeter creature: she might lie by an emperor's side, and command him tasks.

Iago. Nay, that 's not your way.

Oth. Hang her! I do but say what she is: so delicate with her needle: an admirable musician: O, she will sing the savageness out of a bear: of so high and plenteous wit and invention: —

Iago. She's the worse for all this.

Oth. O, a thousand thousand times: and then, of so gentle a condition!

Iago. Ay, too gentle.

Oth. Nay, that 's certain: but yet the pity of it, Iago! O Iago, the pity of it, Iago!

Iago. If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to offend; for, if it touch not you, it comes near nobody.

Oth. I will chop her into messes: cuckold me!

Iago. O, 't is foul in her.

Oth. With mine officer!

Iago. That's fouler.

Oth. Get me some poison, Iago; this night. I'll not expostulate with her, lest her body and beauty unprovide my mind again: this night, Iago.

Iago. Do it not with poison, strangle her in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated.

---

182 *your way*] your point of view.

189 *condition*] disposition.

193–194 *If you . . . offend*] If you are so foolishly mild about her sinfulness, give her formal right to commit offence.

OTH. Good, good: the justice of it pleases: very
good.

IAGO. And for Cassio, let me be his undertaker: you
shall hear more by midnight.

OTH. Excellent good. [*A trumpet within.*] What trumpet
is that same?

IAGO. Something from Venice, sure. 'T is Lodovico
Come from the duke: and, see, your wife is with him.

*Enter* LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, *and* Attendants

LOD. God save the worthy general!

OTH. With all my heart, sir.

LOD. The duke and senators of Venice greet you.
[*Gives him a letter.*

OTH. I kiss the instrument of their pleasures.
[*Opens the letter, and reads.*

DES. And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico?

IAGO. I am very glad to see you, signior;
Welcome to Cyprus.

LOD. I thank you. How does Lieutenant Cassio?

IAGO. Lives, sir.

DES. Cousin, there's fall'n between him and my lord
An unkind breach: but you shall make all well.

OTH. Are you sure of that?

DES. My lord?

OTH. [*Reads*] "This fail you not to do, as you will —"

LOD. He did not call; he's busy in the paper.
Is there division 'twixt my lord and Cassio?

---

206 *let me . . . undertaker*] let me take up your cause of quarrel with him. "Undertaker" was the title commonly bestowed on such interveners in controversy.

DES. A most unhappy one: I would do much
To atone them, for the love I bear to Cassio.
OTH. Fire and brimstone!
DES. My lord?
OTH. Are you wise?
DES. What, is he angry?
LOD. May be the letter moved him;
For, as I think, they do command him home,
Deputing Cassio in his government.
DES. By my troth, I am glad on 't.
OTH. Indeed!
DES. My lord?
OTH. I am glad to see you mad.
DES. Why, sweet Othello?
OTH. Devil! [*Striking her.*
DES. I have not deserved this.
LOD. My lord, this would not be believed in Venice,
Though I should swear I saw 't: 't is very much:
Make her amends; she weeps.
OTH. O devil, devil!
If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,
Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.
Out of my sight!

---

227 *atone*] reconcile.

230 *Are you wise?*] Are you prudent in talking thus? Fechter, the actor, assigned these words to Iago, assuming them to be a hint to Othello to control himself better.

242 *falls*] lets fall.

*a crocodile*] In popular natural history crocodiles were a type of deceitfulness and insincerity. Hence, feigned tears are commonly known as "crocodile's tears."

DES. I will not stay to offend you. [*Going.*
LOD. Truly, an obedient lady:
I do beseech your lordship, call her back.
OTH. Mistress!
DES. My lord?
OTH. What would you with her, sir?
LOD. Who, I, my lord?
OTH. Ay; you did wish that I would make her turn:
Sir, she can turn and turn, and yet go on,
And turn again; and she can weep, sir, weep;
And she's obedient, as you say, obedient,
Very obedient. Proceed you in your tears.
Concerning this, sir, — O well-painted passion! —
I am commanded home. Get you away;
I'll send for you anon. Sir, I obey the mandate,
And will return to Venice. Hence, avaunt!
[*Exit Desdemona.*
Cassio shall have my place. And, sir, to-night,
I do entreat that we may sup together:
You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus. Goats and monkeys!
[*Exit.*
LOD. Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate
Call all in all sufficient? This the nature
Whom passion could not shake? whose solid virtue
The shot of accident nor dart of chance
Could neither graze nor pierce?

---

254 *well-painted passion*] cleverly simulated passion.

260 *Goats and monkeys*] Othello recalls Iago's references to the lasciviousness of goats and monkeys, III, iii, 407, *supra.*

264 *accident . . . chance*] The distinction between these two words is not quite obvious. "Accident" may mean a personal calamity, and

IAGO. He is much changed.
LOD. Are his wits safe? is he not light of brain?
IAGO. He's that he is: I may not breathe my censure
What he might be: if what he might be is not,
I would to heaven he were!
LOD. What, strike his wife!
IAGO. Faith, that was not so well; yet would I knew
That stroke would prove the worst!
LOD. Is it his use?
Or did the letters work upon his blood,
And new create this fault?
IAGO. Alas, alas!
It is not honesty in me to speak
What I have seen and known. You shall observe him,
And his own courses will denote him so
That I may save my speech: do but go after,
And mark how he continues.
LOD. I am sorry that I am deceived in him. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II — A ROOM IN THE CASTLE

*Enter* OTHELLO *and* EMILIA

OTH. You have seen nothing, then?
EMIL. Nor ever heard, nor ever did suspect.
OTH. Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.

"chance" a turn of fortune involving more than mere personal consequences.

267 *censure*] opinion.

274 *honesty*] honourable.

**Emil.** But then I saw no harm, and then I heard
Each syllable that breath made up between them.
**Oth.** What, did they never whisper?
**Emil.** Never, my lord.
**Oth.** Nor send you out o' the way?
**Emil.** Never.
**Oth.** To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor nothing?
**Emil.** Never, my lord.
**Oth.** That's strange.
**Emil.** I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,
Lay down my soul at stake: if you think other,
Remove your thought; it doth abuse your bosom.
If any wretch have put this in your head,
Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse!
For if she be not honest, chaste and true,
There's no man happy; the purest of their wives
Is foul as slander.
**Oth.** Bid her come hither: go. [*Exit Emilia.*
She says enough: yet she's a simple bawd
That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore,
A closet lock and key of villanous secrets:
And yet she'll kneel and pray; I have seen her do 't.

*Enter* DESDEMONA *with* EMILIA

**Des.** My lord, what is your will?
**Oth.** Pray, chuck, come hither.
**Des.** What is your pleasure?
**Oth.** Let me see your eyes;
Look in my face.

**Des.** What horrible fancy 's this?
**Oth.** [*To Emilia*] Some of your function, mistress,
Leave procreants alone and shut the door;
Cough, or cry hem, if any body come:
Your mystery, your mystery: nay, dispatch. [*Exit Emilia.*
**Des.** Upon my knees, what doth your speech import?
I understand a fury in your words,
But not the words.
**Oth.** Why, what art thou?
**Des.** Your wife, my lord; your true and loyal wife.
**Oth.** Come, swear it, damn thyself;
Lest, being like one of heaven, the devils themselves
Should fear to seize thee: therefore be double-damn'd;
Swear thou art honest.
**Des.** Heaven doth truly know it.
**Oth.** Heaven truly knows that thou art false as hell.
**Des.** To whom, my lord? with whom? how am I false?
**Oth.** O Desdemona! Away! away! away!
**Des.** Alas the heavy day! Why do you weep?
Am I the motive of these tears, my lord?
If haply you my father do suspect
An instrument of this your calling back,
Lay not your blame on me: if you have lost him,
Why, I have lost him too.

---

27 *Some of your function*] Some persons practising your line of business (of procuress or bawd).

30 *Your mystery*] Bethink you of your trade or profession of procuress.

37–38 *Lest . . . double-damn'd*] Lest being like an angel, like one of the elect of heaven, the fiends of hell themselves should fear to touch you. Therefore heap sin upon sin, add perjury to adultery.

**Oth.** Had it pleased heaven
To try me with affliction; had they rain'd
All kinds of sores and shames on my bare head,
Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips,
Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes,
I should have found in some place of my soul
A drop of patience: but, alas, to make me
A fixed figure for the time of scorn
To point his slow unmoving finger at!
Yet could I bear that too; well, very well:
But there, where I have garner'd up my heart,
Where either I must live or bear no life,
The fountain from the which my current runs,
Or else dries up; to be discarded thence!
Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads
To knot and gender in! Turn thy complexion there,

49 *they*] *sc.* the heavens.

55–56 *A fixed figure . . . finger at*] This is substantially the reading of the Quartos, though the First Quarto has *fingers* for *finger*, and *at* is followed in all by *oh, oh.* The main change in the Folios is the substitution of *The* for *A* in line 55, and of *and mouing* for *vnmouing* in line 56. The metaphor is drawn from a clock. "A fixed figure" refers to the small figure of a man which ornamented a clock, and sometimes played a part in the mechanism by striking a bell to sound the hours or quarter hours. Cf. *Rich. II*, V, v, 60, "I stand fooling here his *Jack o' the clock*," and *Rich. III*, IV, ii, 118, "like *a Jack* thou keep'st the stroke." "The time of scorn" means "the hour of scorn," "hour" being put for the dial or clock's face on which the hours are indicated. "Slow unmoving finger" is the dial hand or pointer with its imperceptible movement.

58 *garner'd up*] treasured, stored.

63–65 *Turn . . . as hell*] Apparently Patience, being apostrophised, is

Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin,
Ay, there, look grim as hell!
  **Des.** I hope my noble lord esteems me honest.
  **Oth.** O, ay; as summer flies are in the shambles,
That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed,
Who art so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet
That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst ne'er been born!
  **Des.** Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?
  **Oth.** Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,
Made to write "whore" upon? What committed!
Committed! O thou public commoner!
I should make very forges of my cheeks,
That would to cinders burn up modesty,
Did I but speak thy deeds. What committed!
Heaven stops the nose at it, and the moon winks;
The bawdy wind, that kisses all it meets,
Is hush'd within the hollow mine of earth,
And will not hear it. What committed!
Impudent strumpet!

---

warned that it will change colour in presence of such filth, and that all its normal fresh beauty would become ugly as hell in view of such corruption. Othello exaggerates the beauty and virtue of patience, which could find no place in his present condition of mind. Cherubin, used here as a singular, is really the plural of "cherub."

73 *committed!*] The word has a technical sense of doing unlawful acts of love. Cf. *Lear*, III, iv, 81: "*commit* not with man's sworn spouse."

74–77 *Committed . . . committed!*] These lines are omitted from the First Quarto.

79 *The bawdy wind . . . meets*] Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, II, vi, 16: "*Hugg'd* and embraced by *the strumpet wind.*"

**Des.** By heaven, you do me wrong.
**Oth.** Are not you a strumpet?
**Des.** No, as I am a Christian:
If to preserve this vessel for my lord
From any other foul unlawful touch
Be not to be a strumpet, I am none.
**Oth.** What, not a whore?
**Des.** No, as I shall be saved.
**Oth.** Is 't possible?
**Des.** O, heaven forgive us!
**Oth.** I cry you mercy then:
I took you for that cunning whore of Venice
That married with Othello. [*Raising his voice*] You, mistress,
That have the office opposite to Saint Peter,
And keep the gate of hell!

*Re-enter* Emilia

You, you, ay, you!
We have done our course; there's money for your pains:
I pray you, turn the key, and keep our counsel. [*Exit.*
**Emil.** Alas, what does this gentleman conceive?
How do you, madam? how do you, my good lady?
**Des.** Faith, half asleep.
**Emil.** Good madam, what's the matter with my lord?
**Des.** With who?
**Emil.** Why, with my lord, madam.

---

84 *this vessel for my lord*] an obvious scriptural reminiscence.

89 *I cry you mercy*] I beg your pardon. Cf. V, i, 69, *infra*.

92 *office opposite to Saint Peter*] office opposed to that of St. Peter, who keeps the keys of heaven.

DES. Who is thy lord?
EMIL. He that is yours, sweet lady.
DES. I have none: do not talk to me, Emilia;
I cannot weep, nor answer have I none
But what should go by water. Prithee, to-night
Lay on my bed my wedding sheets: remember;
And call thy husband hither.
EMIL. Here's a change indeed! [*Exit.*
DES. 'T is meet I should be used so, very meet.
How have I been behaved, that he might stick
The small'st opinion on my least misuse?

*Re-enter* EMILIA *with* IAGO

IAGO. What is your pleasure, madam? How is 't with you?
DES. I cannot tell. Those that do teach young babes
Do it with gentle means and easy tasks:
He might have chid me so; for, in good faith,
I am a child to chiding.
IAGO. What's the matter, lady?
EMIL. Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhored her,
Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her,
As true hearts cannot bear.
DES. Am I that name, Iago?
IAGO. What name, fair lady?
DES. Such as she says my lord did say I was.

---

105 *go by water*] express itself in tears.

110 *opinion*] ill opinion or suspicion.
*least misuse*] slightest fault. Thus all the early editions, save the First Quarto, which reads *greatest abuse*.

EMIL. He call'd her whore: a beggar in his drink
Could not have laid such terms upon his callet.
IAGO. Why did he so?
DES. I do not know; I am sure I am none such.
IAGO. Do not weep, do not weep. Alas the day!
EMIL. Hath she forsook so many noble matches,
Her father and her country and her friends,
To be call'd whore? would it not make one weep?
DES. It is my wretched fortune.
IAGO. Beshrew him for 't!
How comes this trick upon him?
DES. Nay, heaven doth know.
EMIL. I will be hang'd, if some eternal villain,
Some busy and insinuating rogue,
Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office,
Have not devised this slander; I'll be hang'd else.
IAGO. Fie, there is no such man; it is impossible.
DES. If any such there be, heaven pardon him!
EMIL. A halter pardon him! and hell gnaw his bones!
Why should he call her whore? who keeps her company?
What place? what time? what form? what likelihood?
The Moor 's abused by some most villanous knave,
Some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow.
O heaven, that such companions thou 'ldst unfold,

---

122 *callet*] a low prostitute.
131 *eternal*] infernal; a common term of extreme abhorrence.
132 *busy and insinuating*] officious and plausible.
133 *cogging, cozening*] lying, cheating.
141 *notorious*] outrageous, deserving to be branded. Cf. V, ii, 242, *infra*.
142 *companions*] fellows; a word of scorn.

And put in every honest hand a whip
To lash the rascals naked through the world
Even from the east to the west!
  IAGO.                                   Speak within door.
  EMIL. O, fie upon them! Some such squire he was
That turn'd your wit the seamy side without,
And made you to suspect me with the Moor.
  IAGO. You are a fool; go to.
  DES.                                   O good Iago,
What shall I do to win my lord again?
Good friend, go to him; for, by this light of heaven,
I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel:
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love
Either in discourse of thought or actual deed,
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,
Delighted them in any other form,
Or that I do not yet, and ever did,
And ever will, though he do shake me off
To beggarly divorcement, love him dearly,
Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much;
And his unkindness may defeat my life,
But never taint my love. I cannot say "whore":
It doth abhor me now I speak the word;

---

145 *Speak within door*] Don't speak so loud as to be heard outside the door.

148 *suspect me with the Moor*] Cf. I, iii, 381–382, and II, i, 289–293, *supra*.

154 *discourse of thought*] range or course of thought. Cf. *Hamlet*, I, ii, 150: "*discourse* of reason."

161 *defeat*] destroy.

163 *It doth abhor me*] It is abhorrent to me.

To do the act that might the addition earn
Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.
IAGO. I pray you, be content; 't is but his humour:
The business of the state does him offence,
And he does chide with you.
DES. If 't were no other, —
IAGO. 'T is but so, I warrant. [*Trumpets within.*
Hark, how these instruments summon to supper!
The messengers of Venice stay the meat:
Go in, and weep not; all things shall be well.
[*Exeunt Desdemona and Emilia.*

*Enter* RODERIGO

How now, Roderigo!

ROD. I do not find that thou dealest justly with me.

IAGO. What in the contrary?

ROD. Every day thou daffest me with some device, Iago; and rather, as it seems to me now, keepest from me all conveniency than suppliest me with the least advantage of hope. I will indeed no longer endure it; nor am I yet persuaded to put up in peace what already I have foolishly suffered.

IAGO. Will you hear me, Roderigo?

ROD. Faith, I have heard too much; for your words and performances are no kin together.

---

**164** *addition*] title.

**176** *daffest me*] puttest me off.

**183–184** *for your words and*] In the Duke of Devonshire's copy and in at least three other extant copies of the First Folio a careless printer has substituted for these words the phrase *and hell gnaw his bones*, thus repeating by a freak of misdirected vision Emilia's angry ejaculation

IAGO. You charge me most unjustly.

ROD. With nought but truth. I have wasted myself out of my means. The jewels you have had from me to deliver to Desdemona would half have corrupted a votarist: you have told me she hath received them and returned me expectations and comforts of sudden respect and acquaintance; but I find none.

IAGO. Well; go to; very well.

ROD. Very well! go to! I cannot go to, man; nor 't is not very well: by this hand, I say 't is very scurvy, and begin to find myself fopped in it.

IAGO. Very well.

ROD. I tell you 't is not very well. I will make myself known to Desdemona: if she will return me my jewels, I will give over my suit and repent my unlawful solicitation; if not, assure yourself I will seek satisfaction of you.

IAGO. You have said now.

ROD. Ay, and said nothing but what I protest intendment of doing.

IAGO. Why, now I see there's mettle in thee; and even from this instant do build on thee a better opinion than ever before. Give me thy hand, Roderigo: thou hast taken against me a most just exception; but yet, I protest, I have dealt most directly in thy affair.

---

from line 137, *supra*. In the majority of the copies of the First Folio the mistake is corrected.

188 *a votarist*] a nun.

190 *sudden respect*] prompt show of regard.

195 *fopped*] deluded, deceived; "fobbed" is the more ordinary form.

202 *intendment*] intention.

Rod. It hath not appeared.

Iago. I grant indeed it hath not appeared, and your suspicion is not without wit and judgement. But, Roderigo, if thou hast that in thee indeed, which I have greater reason to believe now than ever, I mean purpose, courage and valour, this night show it: if thou the next night following enjoy not Desdemona, take me from this world with treachery and devise engines for my life.

Rod. Well, what is it? is it within reason and compass?

Iago. Sir, there is especial commission come from Venice to depute Cassio in Othello's place.

Rod. Is that true? why then Othello and Desdemona return again to Venice.

Iago. O, no; he goes into Mauritania, and takes away with him the fair Desdemona, unless his abode be lingered here by some accident: wherein none can be so determinate as the removing of Cassio.

Rod. How do you mean, removing of him?

Iago. Why, by making him uncapable of Othello's place; knocking out his brains.

Rod. And that you would have me to do?

Iago. Ay, if you dare do yourself a profit and a right. He sups to-night with a harlotry, and thither will I go to him: he knows not yet of his honourable fortune. If you will watch his going thence, which I will fashion to fall out between twelve and one, you may

---

216 *devise engines . . . life*] plot to destroy my life.

232 *harlotry*] harlot. Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, IV, ii, 14: "A peevish self-will'd *harlotry*."

take him at your pleasure: I will be near to second your attempt, and he shall fall between us. Come, stand not amazed at it, but go along with me; I will show you such a necessity in his death that you shall think yourself bound to put it on him. It is now high supper-time, and the night grows to waste: about it.

ROD. I will hear further reason for this.

IAGO. And you shall be satisfied. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE III — ANOTHER ROOM IN THE CASTLE

*Enter* OTHELLO, LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, EMILIA, *and* Attendants

LOD. I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no further.

OTH. O, pardon me; 't will do me good to walk.

LOD. Madam, good night; I humbly thank your ladyship.

DES. Your honour is most welcome.

OTH. Will you walk, sir?
O, — Desdemona, —

DES. My lord?

OTH. Get you to bed on the instant; I will be returned forthwith: dismiss your attendant there: look it be done.

DES. I will, my lord.

[*Exeunt Othello, Lodovico, and Attendants.*

---

240–241 *high supper-time*] fully the hour of supper.
4 *walk*] withdraw.

EMIL. How goes it now? he looks gentler than he
did.
DES. He says he will return incontinent:
He hath commanded me to go to bed,
And bade me to dismiss you.
EMIL. Dismiss me!
DES. It was his bidding; therefore, good Emilia,
Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu:
We must not now displease him.
EMIL. I would you had never seen him!
DES. So would not I: my love doth so approve him,
That even his stubbornness, his checks, his frowns, —
Prithee, unpin me, — have grace and favour in them.
EMIL. I have laid those sheets you bade me on the
bed.
DES. All's one. Good faith, how foolish are our
minds!
If I do die before thee, prithee, shroud me
In one of those same sheets.
EMIL. Come, come, you talk.
DES. My mother had a maid call'd Barbara:
She was in love; and he she loved proved mad
And did forsake her: she had a song of "willow;"
An old thing 't was, but it express'd her fortune,
And she died singing it: that song to-night

---

11 *incontinent*] immediately.

22 *Good faith*] Thus the First Quarto. All other early editions read absurdly *good father*.

24 *you talk*] you chatter thoughtlessly.

26 *mad*] wild, fickle.

27 *a song of "willow"*] Shakespeare adapts the song, which he gives

Will not go from my mind; I have much to do
But to go hang my head all at one side
And sing it like poor Barbara. Prithee, dispatch.
**Emil.** Shall I go fetch your night-gown?
**Des.** No, unpin me here.
This Lodovico is a proper man.
**Emil.** A very handsome man.
**Des.** He speaks well.

**Emil.** I know a lady in Venice would have walked barefoot to Palestine for a touch of his nether lip.

**Des.** [*Singing*] The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
Sing all a green willow;
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
Sing willow, willow, willow:
The fresh streams ran by her, and murmur'd her moans;
Sing willow, willow, willow;
Her salt tears fell from her, and soften'd the stones; —

Lay by these: —

[*Singing*] Sing willow, willow, willow;

Prithee, hie thee; he'll come anon: —

---

lines 39–56, *infra*, from an old ballad, probably of early sixteenth century date. The original music is extant. Percy printed a version of the words from a copy in the Pepysian library (at Magdalene College, Cambridge), entitled "A lover's complaint, being forsaken of his love, to a pleasant tune." There and elsewhere the singer is a man. "Willow, willow" was a favourite burden of many other sixteenth century songs.

30–51 *I have . . . next*] The First Quarto omits this passage.

30–31 *I have much to do But to go*] I can hardly refrain from going.

[*Singing*] Sing all a green willow must be my garland.
Let nobody blame him; his scorn I approve, —
Nay, that's not next. Hark! who is 't that knocks?
Emil. It's the wind.

Des. [*Singing*] I call'd my love false love; but what said he then?
Sing willow, willow, willow:
If I court moe women, you'll couch with moe men.

So get thee gone; good night. Mine eyes do itch;
Doth that bode weeping?
Emil. 'T is neither here nor there.
Des. I have heard it said so. O, these men, these men!
Dost thou in conscience think, — tell me, Emilia, —
That there be women do abuse their husbands
In such gross kind?
Emil. There be some such, no question.
Des. Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?
Emil. Why, would not you?
Des. No, by this heavenly light!
Emil. Nor I neither by this heavenly light; I might do't as well i' the dark.
Des. Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?
Emil. The world's a huge thing: it is a great price
For a small vice.

---

49 *Sing . . . garland*] Cf. *Much Ado*, II, i, 193–194: "I offered him my company to a *willow-tree*, either to make him a *garland*," etc.

53–55 *I call'd . . . men*] The First Quarto omits these lines.

55 *moe . . . moe*] more . . . more.

58–61 *I have . . . question*] The First Quarto omits these lines.

**Des.** In troth, I think thou wouldst not.

**Emil.** In troth, I think I should; and undo 't when I had done. Marry, I would not do such a thing for a joint-ring, nor for measures of lawn, nor for gowns, petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition; but, for the whole world, — why, who would not make her husband a cuckold to make him a monarch? I should venture purgatory for 't.

**Des.** Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong
For the whole world.

**Emil.** Why, the wrong is but a wrong i' the world; and having the world for your labour, 't is a wrong in your own world, and you might quickly make it right.

**Des.** I do not think there is any such woman.

**Emil.** Yes, a dozen; and as many to the vantage as would store the world they played for.
But I do think it is their husbands' faults
If wives do fall: say that they slack their duties
And pour our treasures into foreign laps,
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,
Throwing restraint upon us, or say they strike us,
Or scant our former having in despite,

---

71 *joint-ring*] a token of troth-plight, usually of small intrinsic value; it was first broken in two parts which were then neatly riveted together.

72 *exhibition*] allowance.

82 *to the vantage*] into the bargain.

83 *store*] stock.

84–101 *But I do think. . . us so*] The First Quarto omits this passage.

86 *treasures*] Cf. *1 Hen. IV*, II, iii, 42–43: "given my *treasures* and my rights of thee To . . . melancholy."

89 *having*] allowance for expenses.

Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace,
Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know
Their wives have sense like them: they see and smell
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,
As husbands have. What is it that they do
When they change us for others? Is it sport?
I think it is: and doth affection breed it?
I think it doth: is 't frailty that thus errs?
It is so too: and have not we affections,
Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?
Then let them use us well: else let them know,
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

Des. Good night, good night: heaven me such uses send,
Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend! [*Exeunt.*

---

92 *sense*] sensual appetite.

102 *uses*] experiences, with a reference to Emilia's phrase, line 100, *supra*, "then let them *use* us."

# ACT FIFTH — SCENE I — CYPRUS

## *A STREET*

*Enter* Iago *and* Roderigo

**Iago**

HERE, STAND BEHIND THIS bulk; straight will he come:
Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home:
Quick, quick; fear nothing; I'll be at thy elbow:
It makes us, or it mars us; think on that,
And fix most firm thy resolution.

**Rod.** Be near at hand; I may miscarry in 't.

**Iago.** Here, at thy hand: be bold, and take thy stand. [*Retires.*

**Rod.** I have no great devotion to the deed;
And yet he hath given me satisfying reasons:
'T is but a man gone. Forth, my sword: he dies.

IAGO. I have rubb'd this young quat almost to the sense,
And he grows angry. Now, whether he kill Cassio,
Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other,
Every way makes my gain: live Roderigo,
He calls me to a restitution large
Of gold and jewels that I bobb'd from him,
As gifts to Desdemona:
It must not be: if Cassio do remain,
He hath a daily beauty in his life
That makes me ugly; and besides, the Moor
May unfold me to him; there stand I in much peril:
No, he must die. Be 't so. I hear him coming.

*Enter* CASSIO

ROD. I know his gait; 't is he. Villain, thou diest!
[*Makes a pass at Cassio.*
CAS. That thrust had been mine enemy indeed,

---

1 *bulk*] a stall or counter outside a shop. Florio in his Italian-English Dictionary explains "Balcone" as "a bulke, or stall of a shop." Cf. *Cor.*, II, i, 200: "stalls, *bulks*, windows." *Bulke* is the reading of the Quartos, for which the Folios substitute unsatisfactorily *Barke* or *Bark*.

7 *stand*] technically applied to the place chosen by the huntsmen for shooting at the deer.

11 *quat*] Thus all the early editions, save the First Quarto, which reads *gnat*. "Quat" means in Warwickshire dialect "a pimple." It is employed here as a term of contempt, like "scab" in *Tw. Night*, II, v, 69. "Rubb'd to the sense" is rubbed to the quick, so as to make the spot or sore "angry."

14 *gain*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *game*.

16 *bobb'd*] cheated or swindled. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, III, i, 65.

But that my coat is better than thou know'st:
I will make proof of thine. [*Draws, and wounds Roderigo.*
Rod. O, I am slain!
[*Iago from behind wounds Cassio in the leg, and exit.*
Cas. I am maim'd for ever. Help, ho! murder!
murder! [*Falls.*

*Enter* Othello

Oth. The voice of Cassio: Iago keeps his word.
Rod. O, villain that I am!
Oth. It is even so.
Cas. O, help, ho! light! a surgeon!
Oth. 'T is he. O brave Iago, honest and just,
That hast such noble sense of thy friend's wrong!
Thou teachest me. Minion, your dear lies dead,
And your unblest fate hies: strumpet, I come!
Forth of my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted;
Thy bed lust-stain'd shall with lust's blood be spotted.
[*Exit.*

*Enter* Lodovico *and* Gratiano

Cas. What, ho! no watch? no passage? murder!
murder!
Gra. 'T is some mischance; the cry is very direful.

---

25 *my coat*] Cassio probably wears an undercoat of mail, *i. e.*, a tunic of finely wrought links of steel.

34 *hies*] hastes away. The Folios read *highes*, and the Quartos *hies apace.*

35 *Forth of*] Out of. Thus the Quartos; the First Folio reads *For of*, the other Folios *For off*.

37 *no passage?*] no traffic? are no persons passing by? is nobody about? Cf. *Com. of Errors*, III, i, 99: "the stirring *passage* of the day," *i. e.*, the hour when traffic is busiest.

CAS. O, help!
LOD. Hark!
ROD. O wretched villain!
LOD. Two or three groan: it is a heavy night:
These may be counterfeits: let 's think 't unsafe
To come in to the cry without more help.
ROD. Nobody come? then shall I bleed to death.
LOD. Hark!

*Re-enter* IAGO, *with a light*

GRA. Here's one comes in his shirt, with light and weapons.
IAGO. Who's there? whose noise is this that cries on murder?
LOD. We do not know.
IAGO. Did not you hear a cry?
CAS. Here, here! for heaven's sake, help me!
IAGO. What's the matter?
GRA. This is Othello's ancient, as I take it.
LOD. The same indeed; a very valiant fellow.
IAGO. What are you here that cry so grievously?
CAS. Iago? O, I am spoil'd, undone by villains!
Give me some help.
IAGO. O me, lieutenant! what villains have done this?
CAS. I think that one of them is hereabout,
And cannot make away.

---

42 *a heavy night*] a dark cloudy night.
48 *cries on*] calls out.
51 *ancient*] ensign. See note on I, i, 33, *supra.*
58 *make away*] make off, escape.

**Iago.** O treacherous villains!
What are you there? come in and give some help.
[*To Lodovico and Gratiano.*
**Rod.** O, help me here!
**Cas.** That 's one of them.
**Iago.** O murderous slave! O villain!
[*Stabs Roderigo.*
**Rod.** O damn'd Iago! O inhuman dog!
**Iago.** Kill men i' the dark! Where be these bloody thieves?
How silent is this town! Ho! murder! murder!
What may you be? are you of good or evil?
**Lod.** As you shall prove us, praise us.
**Iago.** Signior Lodovico?
**Lod.** He, sir.
**Iago.** I cry you mercy. Here 's Cassio hurt by villains.
**Gra.** Cassio!
**Iago.** How is 't, brother?
**Cas.** My leg is cut in two.
**Iago.** Marry, heaven forbid!
Light, gentlemen: I'll bind it with my shirt.

*Enter* Bianca

**Bian.** What is the matter, ho? who is't that cried?
**Iago.** Who is 't that cried!
**Bian.** O my dear Cassio! my sweet Cassio! O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!

---

69 *I cry you mercy*] I beg your pardon. Cf. IV, ii, 89, *supra.*

IAGO. O notable strumpet! Cassio, may you suspect
Who they should be that have thus mangled you?
CAS. No.
GRA. I am sorry to find you thus: I have been to seek you.
IAGO. Lend me a garter. So. O, for a chair,
To bear him easily hence!
BIAN. Alas, he faints! O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!
IAGO. Gentlemen all, I do suspect this trash
To be a party in this injury.
Patience awhile, good Cassio. Come, come;
Lend me a light. Know we this face or no?
Alas, my friend and my dear countryman
Roderigo? no:—yes, sure: O heaven! Roderigo.
GRA. What, of Venice?
IAGO. Even he, sir: did you know him?
GRA. Know him! ay.
IAGO. Signior Gratiano? I cry you gentle pardon;
These bloody accidents must excuse my manners,
That so neglected you.
GRA. I am glad to see you.
IAGO. How do you, Cassio? O, a chair, a chair!
GRA. Roderigo!
IAGO. He, he, 't is he. [*A chair brought in.*] O, that's well said; the chair:

---

82-83 *Lend . . . hence*] These lines are omitted from the First Quarto.
85 *trash*] feeble creature. Cf. II, i, 297, *supra*, and note.
86 *To be a party*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *To beare a part.*
93 *I cry . . . pardon*] I beg you kindly pardon. Cf. line 69, *supra*.

Some good man bear him carefully from hence;
I'll fetch the general's surgeon. [*To Bianca*] For you, mistress,
Save you your labour. He that lies slain here, Cassio,
Was my dear friend: what malice was between you?
CAS. None in the world; nor do I know the man.
IAGO. [*To Bian.*] What, look you pale? O, bear him out o' the air. [*Cassio and Roderigo are borne off.*
Stay you, good gentlemen. Look you pale, mistress?
Do you perceive the gastness of her eye?
Nay, if you stare, we shall hear more anon.
Behold her well; I pray you, look upon her:
Do you see, gentlemen? nay, guiltiness will speak,
Though tongues were out of use.

---

101 *Save you your labour*] Iago impatiently deprecates Bianca's attendance on Cassio.

105 *gentlemen*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *gentlewoman*, which has been defended on the ground that Bianca would be following her wounded lover, unless she were restrained by Iago. It is almost certain that Iago is addressing Lodovico and Gratiano, who, now that Cassio has been appointed general in Othello's place, would be bound to render him all the assistance in their power, and would only stay behind him on his removal, at a very urgent entreaty. They do not follow their wounded chief. Iago addresses them again in line 109.

106 *gastness*] ghastliness, deadly paleness. Cf. *Lear*, II, i, 55: "gasted," *i. e.*, frightened, made aghast; *gastness* is the reading of the Folios. The Quartos read less intelligibly *ieastures*.

109–110 *guiltiness . . . of use*] Cf. *Hamlet*, II, ii, 589–590: "*For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak* With most miraculous organ."

*Enter* EMILIA

EMIL. 'Las, what's the matter? what's the matter, husband?
IAGO. Cassio hath here been set on in the dark
By Roderigo, and fellows that are 'scaped:
He 's almost slain, and Roderigo dead.
EMIL. Alas, good gentleman! alas, good Cassio!
IAGO. This is the fruit of whoring. Prithee, Emilia,
Go know of Cassio where he supp'd to-night.
What, do you shake at that?
BIAN. He supp'd at my house; but I therefore shake not.
IAGO. O, did he so? I charge you, go with me.
EMIL. Fie, fie upon thee, strumpet!
BIAN. I am no strumpet; but of life as honest
As you that thus abuse me.
EMIL. As I! foh! fie upon thee!
IAGO. Kind gentlemen, let 's go see poor Cassio dress'd.
Come, mistress, you must tell 's another tale.
Emilia, run you to the citadel,
And tell my lord and lady what hath happ'd!
Will you go on? I pray. [*Aside*] This is the night
That either makes me or fordoes me quite. [*Exeunt.*

---

117 *Go know . . . to-night*] This apparent ignorance of Iago as to where Cassio supped is inconsistent with much that has gone before, and must be intended to mystify Emilia as to his own share in recent events. Cassio at IV, i, 160, *supra*, tells Iago he intends to sup with Bianca, and Iago at IV, ii, 232, *supra*, arranges with Roderigo to fetch him from Bianca's house.

129 *fordoes*] ruins, destroys.

## SCENE II — A BEDCHAMBER IN THE CASTLE

*DESDEMONA IN BED ASLEEP — A LIGHT BURNING*

*Enter* OTHELLO

OTH. It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul:
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!
It is the cause. Yet I 'll not shed her blood,
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow
And smooth as monumental alabaster.
Yet she must die, else she 'll betray more men.
Put out the light, and then put out the light:
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent me: but once put out thy light,

---

1 *It is the cause*] Much has been written on the precise meaning of these words here. Othello is justifying to himself his design of murdering his wife, by laying stress on the heinousness of her offence, which demands the sacrifice of her life in the cause of justice. Cf. line 17, *infra*. It is the monstrousness of the crime, he tells his soul, which is the cause and justification of his terrible act of vengeance.

2 *chaste stars*] This epithet is rarely applied to the stars, though commonly applied to the moon, who is often identified with Diana, the goddess of chastity. But it is a natural epithet to apply to the bright, pure stellar light.

5 *monumental alabaster*] alabaster was the ordinary material of monumental tombs.

7 *Put out . . . light*] Put out the candle, and then put out the light of life. In Othello's excited temper the trivial words of the first half of the line "Put out the light" are invested on their involuntary repetition with a terrible significance. This punctuation is that of

Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd the rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again,
It must needs wither: I'll smell it on the tree.
[*Kissing her.*
Ah, balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
Justice to break her sword! One more, one more:
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
And love thee after: one more, and this the last:
So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
But they are cruel tears: this sorrow 's heavenly;
It strikes where it doth love. She wakes.

DES. Who 's there? Othello?

OTH. Ay, Desdemona.

DES. Will you come to bed, my lord?

OTH. Have you pray'd to-night, Desdemona?

DES. Ay, my lord.

OTH. If you bethink yourself of any crime

---

the old editions, and many changes have been suggested. Fielding in his "Journey from this world to the next" has a long and curious dissertation on the histrionic effect of the line and on its pedantic treatment by the commentators.

11 *pattern*] model.

13 *relume*] rekindle. Thus substantially the Folios. The First Quarto reads *returne* and the later Quartos *relumine.* Theobald here adds the stage direction *Sets down the taper.*

21–22 *this sorrow's heavenly; It strikes . . . love*] this sorrow is like the action of God. Cf. *Hebrews*, xii, 6: "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."

Unreconciled as yet to heaven and grace,
Solicit for it straight.
DES. Alas, my lord, what may you mean by that?
OTH. Well, do it, and be brief; I will walk by:
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit;
No; heaven forfend! I would not kill thy soul.
DES. Talk you of killing?
OTH. Ay, I do.
DES. Then heaven have mercy on me!
OTH. Amen, with all my heart!
DES. If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.
OTH. Hum!
DES. And yet I fear you; for you are fatal then
When your eyes roll so: why I should fear I know not,
Since guiltiness I know not; but yet I feel I fear.
OTH. Think on thy sins.
DES. They are loves I bear to you.
OTH. Ay, and for that thou diest.
DES. That death's unnatural that kills for loving.
Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip?
Some bloody passion shakes your very frame:
These are portents; but yet I hope, I hope,
They do not point on me.
OTH. Peace, and be still!

---

31 *walk by*] walk apart, aside.

33 *heaven forfend*] heaven forbid.

45 *That death's . . . loving*] Cf. *Rich. III*, I, ii, 134–135: "It is a quarrel most unnatural, To be revenged on him that loveth you."

49 *point on*] refer to, concern. Cf. *Jul. Cæs.*, I, iii, 31–32: "they are portentous things Unto the climate that they *point upon*."

DES. I will so. What 's the matter?
OTH. That handkerchief which I so loved and gave thee
Thou gavest to Cassio.
DES. No, by my life and soul!
Send for the man, and ask him.
OTH. Sweet soul, take heed,
Take heed of perjury; thou art on thy death-bed.
DES. Ay, but not yet to die.
OTH. Yes, presently:
Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin;
For to deny each article with oath
Cannot remove nor choke the strong conception
That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.
DES. Then Lord have mercy on me!
OTH. I say, amen.
DES. And have you mercy too! I never did
Offend you in my life; never loved Cassio
But with such general warranty of heaven
As I might love: I never gave him token.
OTH. By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in's hand.
O perjured woman! thou dost stone my heart,
And makest me call what I intend to do

---

55 *presently*] immediately, at once.

66 *my heart*] Thus all the early editions, save the First Quarto which reads *thy heart*.

67–68 *makest . . . sacrifice*] Othello means that what he judges to be Desdemona's perjury is hardening his heart, and filling his soul with the pitiless rage of a murderer, instead of with the calmness of a priest engaged in sacrificial offering, which it was his intention to maintain.

A murder, which I thought a sacrifice:
I saw the handkerchief.
  DES. He found it then;
I never gave it him: send for him hither;
Let him confess a truth.
  OTH. He hath confess'd.
  DES. What, my lord?
  OTH. That he hath used thee.
  DES. How? unlawfully?
  OTH. Ay.
  DES. He will not say so.
  OTH. No, his mouth is stopp'd;
Honest Iago hath ta'en order for 't.
  DES. O, my fear interprets! what, is he dead?
  OTH. Had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge
Had stomach for them all.
  DES. Alas, he is betray'd, and I undone!
  OTH. Out, strumpet! weep'st thou for him to my face?
  DES. O, banish me, my lord, but kill me not!
  OTH. Down, strumpet!
  DES. Kill me to-morrow; let me live to-night!
  OTH. Nay, if you strive, —
  DES. But half an hour!
  OTH. Being done, there is no pause.
  DES. But while I say one prayer!

---

76 *hath ta'en order for 't*] has arranged, taken the necessary steps, for that.

86 *Being done . . pause*] The resolution being irrevocable, and the act being practically done, there is no possibility of delay.

OTH. It is too late. [*He stifles her.*
EMIL. [*Within*] My lord, my lord! what, ho! my lord, my lord!
OTH. What noise is this? Not dead? not yet quite dead?
I that am cruel am yet merciful;
I would not have thee linger in thy pain:
So, so.
EMIL. [*Within*] What, ho! my lord, my lord!
OTH. Who's there?
EMIL. [*Within*] O, good my lord, I would speak a word with you!
OTH. Yes: 't is Emilia. By and by. She's dead.
'T is like she comes to speak of Cassio's death.
The noise was here. Ha! no more moving?
Still as the grave. Shall she come in? were 't good?
I think she stirs again. No. What's best to do?
If she come in, she 'll sure speak to my wife:
My wife! my wife! what wife? I have no wife.
O, insupportable! O heavy hour!
Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse

---

87 *It is too late*] Thus all the early editions save the First Quarto, which inserts here a cry from Desdemona's lips, *O Lord, Lord, Lord.*

92 *So, so*] Steevens suggested, and many actors adopt the suggestion, that at these words Othello stabs Desdemona, so as to put her out of her pain. Nothing in the text justifies this conjecture. Othello doubtless presses the pillow down again on Desdemona's face with convulsive energy, or perhaps grasps her neck in order to stop her breathing. Though a fatal fracture of the larynx seems to be the result, it is not inconsistent with medical experience that she should yet be able to gasp out a few sentences. See note on line 120, *infra.*

Of sun and moon, and that the affrighted globe
Should yawn at alteration.
  EMIL. [*Within*] I do beseech you
That I may speak with you, O, good my lord!
  OTH. I had forgot thee: O, come in, Emilia.
Soft; by and by. Let me the curtains draw.
Where art thou? [*Unlocks the door.*

*Enter* EMILIA

What's the matter with thee now?
  EMIL. O, my good lord, yonder's foul murders done!
  OTH. What, now?
  EMIL. But now, my lord.
  OTH. It is the very error of the moon;
She comes more nearer earth than she was wont
And makes men mad.
  EMIL. Cassio, my lord, hath kill'd a young Venetian
Call'd Roderigo.
  OTH. Roderigo kill'd!
And Cassio kill'd!
  EMIL. No, Cassio is not kill'd.
  OTH. Not Cassio kill'd! then murder's out of tune,
And sweet revenge grows harsh.
  DES. O, falsely, falsely murder'd!

---

104 *Should yawn at alteration*] Should be riven asunder under stress of catastrophic revolution. "Yawn" is used as in "yawning chasm."

112 *the very error*] the mere deviation of the moon from its true course. Lunacy, as the word implies, was supposed to be due to irregular movements of the moon.

120 *O, falsely, . . . murder'd!*] Much has been written on the impossibility of Desdemona speaking these lines and of the lines 125, 127, 128

EMIL. Alas, what cry is that?
OTH. That! what?
EMIL. Out, and alas! that was my lady's voice.
Help! help, ho! help! O lady, speak again!
Sweet Desdemona! O sweet mistress, speak!
DES. A guiltless death I die.
EMIL. O, who hath done this deed?
DES. Nobody; I myself. Farewell:
Commend me to my kind lord: O, farewell! [*Dies.*
OTH. Why, how should she be murder'd?
EMIL. Alas, who knows?
OTH. You heard her say herself, it was not I.
EMIL. She said so: I must needs report the truth.
OTH. She 's like a liar gone to burning hell:
'T was I that kill'd her.
EMIL. O, the more angel she,
And you the blacker devil!
OTH. She turn'd to folly, and she was a whore.
EMIL. Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.
OTH. She was false as water.
EMIL. Thou art rash as fire, to say
That she was false: O, she was heavenly true!
OTH. Cassio did top her; ask thy husband else.
O, I were damn'd beneath all depth in hell,

---

subsequently assigned to her, after Othello's strangulation of her. But a momentary revival before actual death is not impossible from a medical point of view. See note on line 92, *supra*.

133 *the more angel she*] Thus Emilia pays tribute to Desdemona's dying falsehood.

135 *folly*] lasciviousness, immoral indulgence.

But that I did proceed upon just grounds
To this extremity. Thy husband knew it all.
Emil. My husband!
Oth. Thy husband.
Emil. That she was false to wedlock?
Oth. Ay, with Cassio. Nay, had she been true,
If heaven would make me such another world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
I'ld not have sold her for it.
Emil. My husband!
Oth. Ay, 't was he that told me first:
An honest man he is, and hates the slime
That sticks on filthy deeds.
Emil. My husband!
Oth. What needs this iteration, woman? I say thy husband.
Emil. O mistress, villany hath made mocks with love!
My husband say that she was false!
Oth. He, woman;
I say thy husband: dost understand the word?
My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.
Emil. If he say so, may his pernicious soul

---

148 *chrysolite*] a rare kind of topaz or jasper, said to be of a greenish hue.

153 *iteration*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *itterance*, which improves the metre. For the form "itterance" or "iterance," cf. the Folio reading *Reprobance* at line 212, *infra*, where the First Quarto reads *Reprobation*.

154–157 *O mistress . . . honest Iago*] These lines are omitted from the First Quarto.

154 *villany . . . love*] villany has taken advantage of or played tricks with love.

Rot half a grain a day! he lies to the heart:
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.
OTH. Ha!
EMIL. Do thy worst:
This deed of thine is no more worthy heaven
Than thou wast worthy her.
OTH. Peace, you were best.
EMIL. Thou hast not half that power to do me harm
As I have to be hurt. O gull! O dolt!
As ignorant as dirt! thou hast done a deed —
I care not for thy sword; I 'll make thee known,
Though I lost twenty lives. Help! help, ho! help!
The Moor hath kill'd my mistress! Murder! murder!

*Enter* MONTANO, GRATIANO, IAGO, *and others*

MON. What is the matter? How now, general!
EMIL. O, are you come, Iago? you have done well,
That men must lay their murders on your neck.
GRA. What is the matter?
EMIL. Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man:
He says thou told'st him that his wife was false:
I know thou didst not, thou 'rt not such a villain.
Speak, for my heart is full.
IAGO. I told him what I thought, and told no more
Than what he found himself was apt and true.
EMIL. But did you ever tell him she was false?
IAGO. I did.

---

168 *As I have to be hurt*] As I have (the power) to endure any hurt you can inflict on me.

180 *apt*] to the purpose, accurate.

EMIL. You told a lie, an odious, damned lie;
Upon my soul, a lie, a wicked lie!
She false with Cassio! Did you say with Cassio?
IAGO. With Cassio, mistress. Go to, charm your tongue.
EMIL. I will not charm my tongue; I am bound to speak:
My mistress here lies murder'd in her bed, —
ALL. O heavens forfend!
EMIL. And your reports have set the murder on.
OTH. Nay, stare not, masters: it is true indeed.
GRA. 'T is a strange truth.
MON. O monstrous act!
EMIL. Villany, villany, villany!
I think upon 't: I think: I smell 't: O villany!
I thought so then: I 'll kill myself for grief:
O villany, villany!
IAGO. What, are you mad? I charge you, get you home.
EMIL. Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak:
'T is proper I obey him, but not now.
Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home.
OTH. O! O! O! *[Falling on the bed.*
EMIL. Nay, lay thee down and roar;

---

186 *charm your tongue*] silence your tongue, put your tongue under a spell of silence.

188–196 *My mistress . . . O villany, villany!*] These lines are omitted from the First Quarto.

195 *I thought so then*] When Emilia gave the handkerchief to Iago, she suspected he wanted it for no honest purpose. See III, iii, 320, *supra*.

For thou hast kill'd the sweetest innocent
That e'er did lift up eye.
  OTH. [*Rising*] O, she was foul!
I scarce did know you, uncle: there lies your niece,
Whose breath indeed these hands have newly stopp'd:
I know this act shows horrible and grim.
  GRA. Poor Desdemona! I am glad thy father 's dead:
Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief
Shore his old thread in twain: did he live now,
This sight would make him do a desperate turn,
Yea, curse his better angel from his side,
And fall to reprobation.
  OTH. 'T is pitiful; but yet Iago knows
That she with Cassio hath the act of shame
A thousand times committed; Cassio confess'd it:
And she did gratify his amorous works
With that recognizance and pledge of love
Which I first gave her; I saw it in his hand:
It was a handkerchief, an antique token
My father gave my mother.

---

208 *mortal*] deadly, fatal.

211 *curse his better angel from his side*] Cf. *Sonnet* cxliv, 5-6: "my female evil Tempteth *my better angel from my side*."

212 *to reprobation*] into eternal perdition. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *to Reprobance*. Both terms are familiar in Calvinistic theology, and their significance survives in the colloquial term "reprobate." For the forms "reprobance" and "reprobation" cf. the Folio reading *itterance* and the Quarto reading *iteration* at line 153, *supra*.

216 *gratify*] show gratitude for, reward.

217 *recognizance*] recognition, acknowledgment.

219-220 *It was . . . my mother*] See note on III, iv, 55-56, *supra*, where

Emil. O heaven! O heavenly powers!
Iago. 'Zounds! hold your peace.
Emil. 'T will out, 't will out. I peace!
No, I will speak as liberal as the north:
Let heaven and men and devils, let them all,
All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.
Iago. Be wise, and get you home.
Emil. I will not.
[*Iago offers to stab Emilia.*
Gra. Fie!
Your sword upon a woman!
Emil. O thou dull Moor! that handkerchief thou speak'st of
I found by fortune and did give my husband;
For often with a solemn earnestness,
More than indeed belong'd to such a trifle,
He begg'd of me to steal it.
Iago. Villanous whore!
Emil. She give it Cassio! no, alas, I found it,
And I did give 't my husband.
Iago. Filth, thou liest!
Emil. By heaven, I do not, I do not, gentlemen.
O murderous coxcomb! what should such a fool
Do with so good a wife?

---

Othello gives another account of the early history of the handkerchief, where it is stated that an "Egyptian charmer" gave it his mother.

223 *liberal as the north*] as free and as unrestrained as a blast of the north wind. All the early editions read *north*, save the First Quarto, which has *ayre*. Cf. *Cymb.*, I, iii, 36-37: "And, like the tyrannous breathing of the *north*, Shakes all our buds from growing."

OTH. Are there no stones in heaven
But what serve for the thunder? Precious villain!
[*He runs at Iago: Iago, from behind, stabs Emilia, and exit.*
GRA. The woman falls: sure, he hath kill'd his wife.
EMIL. Ay, ay: O, lay me by my mistress' side.
GRA. He's gone, but his wife 's kill'd.
MON. 'T is a notorious villain. Take you this weapon,
Which I have here recover'd from the Moor:
Come, guard the door without; let him not pass,
But kill him rather. I'll after that same villain,
For 't is a damned slave. [*Exeunt all but Othello and Emilia.*
OTH. I am not valiant neither,
But every puny whipster gets my sword.
But why should honour outlive honesty?
Let it go all.
EMIL. What did thy song bode, lady?
Hark, canst thou hear me? I will play the swan,

---

237–238 *Are there no stones . . . thunder*] Can heaven not spare one bolt for this villain? is it all needed for thunder? Cf. *Jul. Cæs.*, I, iii, 49, "the *thunderstone*" [*i. e.*, thunderbolt], and *Cymb.*, IV, ii, 272, "the all-dreaded *thunder-stone*."

238 *Precious*] Thus all the old editions, save the Second and Third Quartos, which read *pernitious*.

242 *notorious*] colloquially used much like "egregious" or "outrageous." Cf. IV, ii, 141, *supra*.

247 *whipster*] "whipper-snapper;" a term of contempt.

248 *honour . . . honesty*] Othello is thinking of his own valour and his wife's proven chastity.

249–251 *What did . . . willow*] The First Quarto omits these lines.

250 *I will play the swan*] The ancient superstition that the swan sings for the first time in death is constantly noticed by classical writers and by sixteenth-century English poets. Shakespeare mentions it

And die in music. [*Singing*] Willow, willow, willow.
Moor, she was chaste; she loved thee, cruel Moor;
So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true;
So speaking as I think, I die, I die. [*Dies.*
OTH. I have another weapon in this chamber;
It is a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper.—
O, here it is. Uncle, I must come forth.
GRA. [*Within*] If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear:
Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.
OTH. Look in upon me then, and speak with me,
Or, naked as I am, I will assault thee.

*Re-enter* GRATIANO

GRA. What is the matter?
OTH. Behold, I have a weapon;
A better never did itself sustain
Upon a soldier's thigh: I have seen the day
That with this little arm and this good sword
I have made my way through more impediments
Than twenty times your stop: but, O vain boast!
Who can control his fate? 't is not so now.

---

many times. Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, III, ii, 44–45: "he *makes a swan-like end* Fading in music."

256 *It is a sword of Spain . . . temper*] The best swords came from Spain, and more especially from Bilboa or Toledo. The steel blades were tempered by plunging the steel while it was red-hot into ice-cold water. Martial (*Epigrams*, Bk. i, 49, 12, and iv, 55, 15) mentions that the icy-cold temperature of the Spanish river Xalon effectively tempered steel if it were plunged into it when it was red-hot.

261 *naked*] *sc.* of arms, unarmed.

267 *your stop*] your power of resistance.

Be not afraid, though you do see me weapon'd;
Here is my journey's end, here is my butt
And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.
Do you go back dismay'd? 't is a lost fear:
Man but a rush against Othello's breast,
And he retires. Where should Othello go?
Now, how dost thou look now? O ill-starr'd wench!
Pale as thy smock! when we shall meet at compt,
This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl!
Even like thy chastity. O cursed slave!
Whip me, ye devils,
From the possession of this heavenly sight!
Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur!
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!
O Desdemona! Desdemona! dead!
Oh! Oh! Oh!

---

269–275] *Be not . . . wench!*] The First Quarto omits these lines.

270 *butt*] goal, target of an archer.

271 *sea-mark*] beacon at sea; cf. *Cor.*, V, iii, 74: "Like a great *sea-mark*."

272 *lost*] useless, profitless.

273 *Man but a rush*] Direct or aim so weak a weapon as a reed or rush.

275 *wench*] often used as a term of endearment.

276 *at compt*] at the day of reckoning or judgment.

282 *Blow . . . winds*] Cf. Claudio's speech in *Meas. for Meas.*, III, i, 125–127: "To be imprison'd in the viewless *winds* And *blown* with restless violence round about The pendent world."

284–285 *O Desdemona! . . . Oh! Oh! Oh!*] Thus substantially the Quartos. The First Folio reads, *Oh Desdemon! dead Desdemon: dead. Oh! oh!* The Second Folio has *dead dead* for the second *dead*. The Third and Fourth Folios accept this last reading, but substitute *Desdemona* for *Desdemon*.

*Enter* LODOVICO, MONTANO, CASSIO *carried in a chair, and*
Officers *with* IAGO, *prisoner*

LOD. Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?
OTH. That 's he that was Othello: here I am.
LOD. Where is that viper? bring the villain forth.
OTH. I look down towards his feet; but that 's a fable.
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.
[*Wounds Iago.*
LOD. Wrench his sword from him.
IAGO. I bleed, sir, but not kill'd.
OTH. I am not sorry neither: I 'ld have thee live;
For, in my sense, 't is happiness to die.
LOD. O thou Othello, that wert once so good,
Fall'n in the practice of a damned slave,
What shall be said to thee?
OTH. Why, any thing:
An honourable murderer, if you will;
For nought did I in hate, but all in honour.
LOD. This wretch hath part confess'd his villany:
Did you and he consent in Cassio's death?
OTH. Ay.
CAS. Dear general, I never gave you cause.
OTH. I do believe it, and I ask your pardon.
Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil
Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body?

---

289 *I look down . . . fable*] a reference to the story that the Devil has cloven feet.

290 *I cannot kill thee*] a reference to the belief that devils are immortal.

295 *practice*] treacherous plot.

IAGO. Demand me nothing; what you know, you know:
From this time forth I never will speak word.
LOD. What, not to pray?
GRA. Torments will ope your lips.
OTH. Well, thou dost best.
LOD. Sir, you shall understand what hath befall'n,
Which, as I think, you know not. Here is a letter
Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo,
And here another: the one of them imports
The death of Cassio to be undertook
By Roderigo.
OTH. O villain!
CAS. Most heathenish and most gross!
LOD. Now here's another discontented paper,
Found in his pocket too; and this, it seems,
Roderigo meant to have sent this damned villain;
But that, belike, Iago in the interim
Came in and satisfied him.
OTH. O the pernicious caitiff!
How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief
That was my wife's?
CAS. I found it in my chamber:
And he himself confess'd but even now
That there he dropp'd it for a special purpose
Which wrought to his desire.
OTH. O fool! fool! fool!
CAS. There is besides in Roderigo's letter,
How he upbraids Iago, that he made him
Brave me upon the watch; whereon it came

That I was cast: and even but now he spake
After long seeming dead, Iago hurt him,
Iago set him on.
  Lod. You must forsake this room, and go with us:
Your power and your command is taken off,
And Cassio rules in Cyprus. For this slave,
If there be any cunning cruelty
That can torment him much and hold him long,
It shall be his. You shall close prisoner rest,
Till that the nature of your fault be known
To the Venetian state. Come, bring away.
  Oth. Soft you; a word or two before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know 't.
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely but too well;
Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
Perplex'd in the extreme; of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away

---

330 *cast*] dismissed. Cf. I, i, 150, *supra*.

348–349 *but . . . extreme*] but one who being wrought upon or incited to suspicion is distracted to despair.

350 *Like the base Indian . . . pearl away*] All the early editions read *Indian* here, except the First Folio, which has *Iudean*. No satisfactory explanation of the First Folio reading, which ruins the metre, has been given, and it may reasonably be treated as a misprint. References to the indifference of American Indians to the value of precious stones and gold abound in Elizabethan literature. Cf. Nashe's *Pierce Penilesse* (1592, ed. McKerrow, Vol. I, p. 241): "like the *Indians*, that

Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinal gum. Set you down this;
And say besides, that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
I took by the throat the circumcised dog
And smote him, thus. [*Stabs himself.*

LOD. O bloody period!

GRA. All that's spoke is marr'd. 360

---

haue store of gold and pretious stones at command, yet are ignorant of their value," and Drayton's Legend of Matilda (*England's Heroical Epistles*): "the wretched *Indian* spurns the golden ore."

353–354 *the Arabian trees . . . gum*] apparently the Arabian acacia tree. which exudes what is known as "gum-arabic." The process of exudation was said to be confined to the night. Cf Greene's *Mourning Garment* [1590] (works, ed. Grosart, Vol. IX, p. 139): "The *Arabic-tree* that yields no *gum* but in the darke night." Othello's "Arabian trees" are quite distinct from the "one tree" in "Arabia" (*Temp.*, III, iii, 22–23) which seems to be the palm; cf. *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, line 2: "the sole *Arabian* tree."

354 *medicinal*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *Medicinable*, which is used by Shakespeare in four other places in the sense of "medicinal." Cf. *Much Ado*, II, ii, 5, *Troil. and Cress.*, I, iii, 91, III, iii, 44, *Cymb.*, III, ii, 33.

355 *Aleppo*] The Venetians had special trading privileges in Aleppo and were frequent visitors there.

357 *the state*] the Venetian republic.

358–359 *I took . . . smote him*] A bold act, for immediate death was the punishment of a Christian who struck a Turk in Turkish territory.

360 *All that's . . . marr'd*] Words are incapable of describing the horror of the scene.

OTH. I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee: no way but this,
Killing myself, to die upon a kiss. [*Falls on the bed, and dies.*
CAS. This did I fear, but thought he had no weapon;
For he was great of heart.
LOD. [*To Iago*] O Spartan dog,
More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea!
Look on the tragic loading of this bed;
This is thy work: the object poisons sight;
Let it be hid. Gratiano, keep the house,
And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,
For they succeed on you. To you, lord governor,
Remains the censure of this hellish villain,
The time, the place, the torture: O, enforce it!
Myself will straight aboard, and to the state
This heavy act with heavy heart relate. [*Exeunt.*

---

364 *great of heart*] of great courage.
*Spartan dog*] Spartan hounds were noted for their savage pertinacity in pursuing their prey.
368 *keep the house*] set guard upon the house.
369 *seize upon*] take legal possession of.
371 *censure*] judgment.
374 *heavy*] sorrowful.